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ABSTRACT

This book contains four papers, each a chapter, that share in the discourse of Paulo Freire and provide varying perspectives on the ways to advance social transformation and achieve a politically literate citizenry as a democratic enterprise. The following four papers are included: "Exploring the Limits of Participatory Democracy: Prudent and Decisive Use of Authority in Adult Education" (Ian Baptiste); "Adult Learning and American Political Debate: Achieving Political Literacy Today" (Ronald Aronson and Karen McDevitt); "A Delicate Balancing Act: Adult Education in South Africa" (James B. Stewart); and "Democratization and Adult Education in Africa" (Kassu Gebremariam). An introduction by the editor, Daphne Ntiri, provides an overview of the papers and the viewpoints of the research. Each paper contains a list of references. (KC)

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Models for Adult and Lifelong Learning
Volume 3

ED 458 412

Politicization and Democratization of Adult Education

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Models for Adult and Lifelong Learning
Volume 3

Politicization and Democratization of Adult Education

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INTRODUCTION

It is Fall 2000, and this third issue of the series on the *Politicization and the Democratization of Adult Education* cannot be more timely. It serves as a significant commentary on the political climate of the day—the 2000 presidential elections, characterized by partisan politics and the pressures of the political campaigns and debates. Though it is said that there is more parity between the parties today than at any time in modern memory, Aronson and McDevitt in this volume (2001) remind us that voter registration has been steadily declining (down from 69.3% in 1964 to 54.2% in 1996). It is no surprise that a political analyst recently asked the question: Will America ever achieve true political power of its people or will the masses remain the marginalized, voiceless and powerless in civic consciousness required for participatory democracy?

This moment in time is both a critical and historical juncture for America's democratic future. This first presidential election of the new millennium finds us at the crossroads of political fervor where liberalism and conservatism jockey for leadership and power in the kingdom of voters. Presidential candidates negotiate all matters of time, place and format and their rhetoric is sustained on issues as mundane as school partnerships and as crucial as Medicare and the abortion platform. A part of the overall plan is the promotion of the ideal democratic order while ensuring the growth of long-term economic prosperity for all. However, adults in the educational process, 40 million of whom are dysfunctional readers, are discouraged by the impact of their political participation. This mass of constituents shows not even a faint expectation that the victorious administration will promote progressive programs of intervention or address social inequalities at a structural level. In sum, the power of the collective voice to promote wide-scale enlightenment and empowerment of the people has been passive rather than active.

Historically, with the limitations of traditional education, adult education emerged to serve major societal needs. In the political arena, its role was more forceful when combined with political action. It hastened the attainment of greater heights in institution-building in the United States. It was adult education that facilitated the voice of protest and gave meaning to a number of organizations in the United States, namely the National American Women Suffrage Association, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Knights of Labor, the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, and the Farmer's Alliance. Within the labor movement, it was the essential tool used to teach the logic of collective benefits, worker solidarity and social transformation (Familusi, 1998).

It was also Paulo Freire, a political educator and visionary, who challenged traditional structures to introduce alternative educational approaches to improving the social conditions of the poor and uneducated adult masses in Brazil. With his theory of critical consciousness coupled with political awareness, "conscientization," he instructed the world in a new pedagogy for social transformation and cultural action. In his dialectics, he argued and agitated against the exploitation, domination and oppression of the masses by the elite and powerful. His research approach and the application of this theory have blossomed among scholars searching for new and alternative models for adult learning. Among countries that embraced this philosophy of elevating the masses—culturally and politically—to active partners in the political process were Tanzania in its development efforts in village centers known as Ujamma, in Ethiopia, Chile, and even in the United States. (See Mulenga, Vol. 1 in this series for more on the work of Paulo Freire and participatory research).

This work is a product of the Office of Adult and Lifelong Learning Research (ALLR), Interdisciplinary Studies Program, College of Lifelong Learning, Wayne State University. It is supported through partnerships with the State of Michigan and other sponsors including the City of Detroit, the U.S. Department of Education, and the United Way of America. ALLR program objectives include the following: a) promotion of intercollegiate and interdisciplinary scholarship on adult education; b) institutional cooperation with the state and related agencies; c) improved relationships with the educational community through delivery of services in teacher training, formulation of degree programs, and presentation of regular seminars on a disciplined inquiry in adult education; and d) volunteerism among undergraduate students through credit-bearing courses in which students teach basic skills to adult learners and the community.

This Office aspires to serve as the central source at Wayne State University for the advancement of theory and practice in the field of adult learning. Simultaneously, ALLR is set to offer leadership in taking on challenges posed in a state where conflicting signals on adult education funding and policy implementation leave practitioners disillusioned and concerned.

I wish to recognize Karen Small, my executive assistant and secretary to the Office of Adult and Lifelong Learning Research, for her networking skills on this assignment. To all our reviewers and consultants of the manuscripts, I also say thanks.

Overview of the Chapters

The contributors in this issue share in the discourse of Freire and provide varying perspectives on the ways to advance social transformation and achieve a politically literate citizenry as a democratic enterprise. In the opening discourse, Ian Baptiste's avid advocacy for participatory democracy puts the reader in a position to learn the distinguishing features of his model on the use of authority in adult education. The politically privileged and the elite are the main perpetrators of a political process gone awry, resulting in the exclusionary conditions that often characterize the democratic process. He expounds on the sanctity of participatory democracy and defines its ethical limits in his search for the right answers. In his outline of a pedagogy of ethical coercion, adult educators are put to the test in light of the contradictions of freedom and restraints imposed on adult learners in the classroom.

Aronson and McDevitt echo a similar note in their arguments for finding one's voice in the political process through forces that help the individual think critically and understand the world around him or her. Giving support for Freire's working philosophy, their political arguments militate for full citizen participation with an action plan that led to the creation of a Center for Democratic Values, and hosting public forums to promote Left versus Right debates. Their contribution provides details of the two debates and the response of the public to the concept of values and its role in an ever-changing political world.

The last two chapters focus on Africa, where democracy is challenged and education of adults for full participation in the democratic process is threatened. Gabremariam is effective in his historical development of adult education in post-colonial Africa, highlighting the growth and decline of both national and international efforts to achieve political literacy on the continent. The ideological thrust of political administrations and lack of political will of many leaders to promote wide-scale adult literacy for participatory democracy account in part for the listlessness among the voting minority. The Tanzanian experience in East Africa, patterned after the Freirean model, becomes a notable case study of significant dimension in Africa and the world. A useful section of the chapter identifies roadblocks to the growth and expansion of adult education on the continent.

The focus on the political transformation of South Africa by Stewart is a careful study of the historical forces and political challenges that today shape a country that for centuries was the ultimate example of political connivance and human oppression. The chapter provides the context for adult basic education programs' role within the African National Congress (ANC). It proceeds with a discussion and analysis of the structural constraints imposed on the current government concerning specific groups such as workers, women, and historically excluded races. The author applies the Paulston and Altenbaugh model in an attempt to examine the typology of prevailing adult education programs in South Africa in terms of structure, affiliation, and objective.

Even in a superpower nation like the United States, where the presence of technology and the written word are overwhelming and the degree of active political participation is not comparable to African nations, the evidence still shows a concern for fuller participatory democracy. The embarrassing details on political participation data among sheltered and minority groups cannot be overlooked. The goal of a literate political citizenry still remains elusive.

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Exploring the Limits of Participatory Democracy:

Prudent and Decisive Use of Authority in Adult Education

Ian Baptiste

Abstract

A cherished maxim in adult education is maximum involvement of learners in the educative process. This maxim eschews all forms of elitism and holds up participatory democracy as the best way to involve adult learners, regardless of context or purpose. Participatory democracy, I argue, is quite suited to conciliatory or mildly conflictive situations. However, in times of fear, uncertainty, or intense conflict, participatory democracy is rendered relatively impotent. In those situations prudence demands that educators use their authority decisively, to instruct or even to coerce.

The Meaning of Participatory Democracy

There are competing and contradictory notions of democracy. Harrison (1993), after a comprehensive review of the literature, reminds us that "there is no particular reason to suppose that there is one single thing which people have in mind when they talk of democracy" (p. 113). Although a comprehensive analysis of democratic theories is beyond the scope of this paper, a few explanatory remarks might be instructive here. Democracy's numerous variants point, in part, to conceptual and logistical dilemmas associated with its attainment: the intractable problem of determining "the people"—those who are supposed to be the final arbiters of democratic transactions; the vexing question of what really constitutes "rulership"—whether it be voting, direct participation, etc.; the tendency toward tyranny of the majority when majority rule is used to settle differences; the vagaries associated with random selection as a substitute for majority rule; the difficulty of determining "the common good"; and so on.

In this paper, however, I will not tackle these dilemmas for three reasons: First, I am not concerned with democracy's *attainability*. Even if entirely attainable, my argument here is that there are times in which democracy is undesirable. Second, more qualified scholars have addressed these concerns (see, for instance, Barber, 1984; Harrison, 1993; Held, 1996; Lakoff, 1996; Lindbom, 1996; Mayo, 1960; Osbun, 1985; Pateman, 1970; Pennock, 1979; Sartori, 1987; Schumpeter, 1962; Tingsten, 1965). Third, and most important, I am concerned only with participatory democracy—the variant to which most adult educators ascribe.

Stephen Brookfield has written extensively about adult education and democracy. He argues that for Lindeman, one of North America's most influential adult educators, "Democracy, by its very nature, was participatory and therefore social" (Brookfield, 1987, preface). And for both Brookfield and Lindeman this type of democracy

> extends far beyond the legislative and administrative activities of city, state and federal agencies. It encompasses personal relationships…across ethnic and sub-cultural divides… [and it includes] activities of community groups geared towards action or towards a common search for the new meaning of experience. [It] is everyday social living, not some rarefied or reified process partaken only by powerful elected representatives. [It] is participatory decision-making and collective action—the collaborative effort to understand one another's viewpoints and experiences. (Brookfield, 1987, preface)

Another prominent adult educator, Shirley Walters (1989), claims that participatory democracy distinguishes itself from other variants by its emphasis on maximum participation by all the people—not just in the selection of public officials/leaders—but also in all decisions (public and private) that affect one's life and the lives of other members of their communities. And she believes that individuals become proficient at this type of participation through social training (education), which itself is participative. Citing Pateman (1970), Walters asserts:

> One might characterise the participatory model as one where maximum input (participation) is required, and where output includes not just policies (decisions) but also the development of the social and political capacities of each individual, so that there is feedback from output to input. (Walters, p. 47, in Pateman, 1970, p. 43)

Other adult education commentators agree with Walters:

> Strong democracy is a distinctively modern form of participatory democracy. It rests on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of civic attitudes and participatory institutions rather than their altruism or good nature (Jimmerson, Hastay, & Long, 1989, p. 455, cf Barber, 1984, p. 117).

It appears, therefore, that *maximum, direct participation of all stakeholders* is the sine qua non of participatory democracy. Remove that pillar, and the house of participatory democracy comes tumbling down. Direct participation means unmediated involvement. Electing experts and leaving the decisions up to them is not good enough for participatory democrats. The rank and file must be actively involved in everyday decisions affecting themselves and their fellow citizens. Time, resources, interest, etc., will no doubt limit the level to which one can and will participate. It seems inconsistent with the democratic spirit to enforce participation. In practice then, maximum, direct participation means: unmediated, everyday involvement of all stakeholders up to the level of their commitment (i.e., willingness and effort).

But to achieve maximum participation one must disallow the use of authority (superior influence or power). Why? Because the use of superior power necessarily prevents others from participating fully. And this is so whether intended or not. In short, the maxim of maximum participation is a maxim of non-elitism—that all stakeholders should be equally privileged. And it matters not whether the privilege is ascribed or earned. Any time we use our authority (e.g., our superior status, abilities, knowledge, experience) for whatever purposes, good or bad, we are contravening the principle of maximum participation. This point cannot be overemphasized. It is this principle (of nonelitism) more than anything else that distinguishes participatory democracy from other liberal and nonliberal variants (Barber, 1984; Brookfield, 1987; Pateman, 1970; Walters, 1989). The genius of U.S.-style liberal democracy, for instance, is its privileging of an elected elite—representatives of the people. The distinction between participatory and liberal democracy (a la the United

States) quickly evaporates once the principle of nonelitism is removed from the former.

This principle of nonelitism is not new. The early Grecian democrats eschewed all forms of elitism (privileging persons on the basis of ascribed or achieved status). And for them, privileging the more knowledgeable or those with superior rank or abilities was clearly a form of elitism. Plato's sailor analogy is a castigation of the democratic distaste for elitism. This is how Harrison (1992) recounts Plato's rebuttal of the democratic principle of non-elitism:

> The famous analogy for this in the *Republic* is that it would be crazy to get all of the sailors to vote on where the ship should go, rather than following the trained person, the pilot. Therefore, democracy, which pays no particular attention to the knowledgeable and instead counts the views of all equally, is a mistaken theory about how to make decisions in politics. (p. 149)

Whether we agree with Plato or not, it is fair to say that the early Greeks considered it a breach of democratic principles to privilege, that is to say, to give superior influence, power, voice, etc., to a knowledgeable elite. In fact, aristocracy is a more historically and etymologically accurate term for privileging those with superior experience, knowledge, and abilities. The thing we call democracy in the United States today more closely resembles aristocracy than it does the politics of the early Grecian democrats because, like aristocracy of old, U.S. democracy privileges an elite—a presumably knowledge elite.

The Sanctity of Participatory Democracy

Adult educators do not merely advocate participatory democracy, theirs is an *unqualified* advocacy. This is so because, for most adult educators, democracy stands, self-evidently, for everything that's good in the world. Consequently, it is generally accepted among adult educators that promoting a democratic order is synonymous with fostering social justice and the good life (Beder, 1989; Ellis, 1993; Freire, 1998; Gleazer, 1993; Heaney, 1992; Jimmerson et al., 1989; Proulx, 1993; Scott, 1991 Walters, 1989). For instance, Lindeman and a younger Brookfield (1987) view democracy as offering the greatest possibility for realizing our humanity. And for them, the democratic mind possesses and exhibits all that is virtuous in the world: tolerance, vigor, imagination, sympathy, respect, humor, self-deprecation, reflectivity, passion, scepticism, and so on. Given such adulation, it isn't surprising that I could not find a single critical comment about participatory democracy in the adult education literature. In fact, a more mature Brookfield argues that all an adult educator has to do to justify her[1] action is to label it as democratic. He laments:

> Of all the ideas frequently espoused as representing an authentic adult educational tradition, democracy comes closest to constituting a grand narrative. The word is used to justify whatever practice adult educators subscribe to, and it serves as a kind of scriptural signaling. We invoke the word to signify our progressive, leftist credentials. Uttering the word 'democracy' represents a sort of ideological masonic handshake. Those who profess to be working democratically, ourselves included, often betray a self-congratulatory smugness. (Baptiste & Brookfield, 1997, p. 26)

I have witnessed the smugness of which Brookfield speaks. As a university professor I have seen colleagues summon the term to abnegate their ethical responsibility as teachers to give direction and guidance to a class. I have also seen students evoke the term to justify racist and xenophobic behavior, to avoid having to defend their obviously indefensible positions, or to justify mediocrity and laziness. When, as the teacher, I challenge such actions, I am often charged with being undemocratic.

I don't deny the charge, but I contest its attributions and implications. For the charge implies that to be undemocratic is to be, ipso facto, unethical. No evidence attesting to my unethical behavior is usually proffered. To pronounce me undemocratic is enough to demonstrate and justify the evil of my ways. For most of my students, democracy stands

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[1] Except where gender needs to be identified, masculine and feminine pronouns are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

(self-evidently) for everything that's good in the world. Consequently, the act of labeling a behavior democratic releases them from having to define what's good about it, or to justify why they hold it as a good. If it's democratic it's good. End of story. One dare not suggest (as I will below) that sometimes it is good to be undemocratic.

To put this discussion in context, I should point out that throughout human history, democracy was not always so revered. On this point Harrison (1993) notes:

> After the Greeks [early framers of democracy] the practice of democracy more or less vanished for two millennia. In the intervening period, generally speaking, societies were not democratic, did not think themselves to be democratic, and, in so far as they thought about democracy at all, thought democracy to be a thoroughly disreputable thing…It is only in the twentieth century and some few precious isolated political societies that democracy has been thought to be a good thing and people have thought, often in completely unquestioning manner, that they lived in societies which could be called democratic." (p. 2)

Harrison and others such as Revel (1993) suggest that one reason for this veneration is the tremendous social and economic benefit attained by countries such as the United States that boast of being democracies. This ascribed success, I believe, must have inspired a very malleable construct. Everyone loves a winner, so everyone seems to be squeezing democracy (the winner) into his or her mold.

Democracy's Malleability Fulfills Humanity's Search for a One Best System

I have encountered educators who are uncomfortable with the notion of situational ethics—the view that the end justifies the means. These individuals are in constant search for what Tyack (1974) has called a *one best system*—that unified set of principles and strategies that would work best (presumably) in every situation. They believe that it is hypocritical and, ultimately, unethical to allow themselves to be guided by different principles in different contexts. Truth is, the situations educators encounter are quite varied—many of which are fraught with values conflict. For instance, there are times when (as educators) our desire for freedom competes with our value for control, when liberty competes with equality, autonomy with interdependency, and so on. The biblical account of a woman from Jericho (Rahab) deceiving her governmental officials in order to protect some Jewish spies is an example of this values conflict (Joshua, ch. 2). She had to choose between loyalty to country and respect for the lives and well-being of foreigners (spies nevertheless). She chose the latter.

Educators who are desirous of a one best system must find one that is extremely malleable and adaptable, given the fact that they work in quite variable contexts—contexts fraught with values conflicts. For many adult educators, democracy provides such malleability. Let me illustrate. In conversations with colleagues who are avowedly democratic loyalists, I have heard them use the term democracy to mean variously: a critical discourse without coming to a decision, a proximate ideal speech situation (a la Habermas) without coming to a decision, a critical discourse in which decisions are made by majority rule, a critical discourse in which decisions are made by those in authority, consensus, and so on. In one instance, I pointed out the chameleon nature of his conception to one of my colleagues. He made two startling revelations. First, he agreed with me that his definition was slippery, but saw nothing wrong with that. In fact, he contended that it was (in part) the chameleon character of democracy that made it such a powerful tool—he could evoke it in any and all situations. (He is certainly right about that.).

When I continued to press my colleague for explanation he made another startling revelation. For him, democracy was defined, not so much by its procedures, but by its ends. Nothing startling so far. But when I quizzed him as to what were the distinctive democratic ends, he basically told me: "All that is good in the world"—justice, peace, equity, respect, tolerance, etc. Driven by a need for a one best system, my colleague felt compelled to heap unto democracy all things good and beautiful, without a sliver of justification. My colleague merely shrugged his shoulders when I suggested that many other competing political systems (some pre-dating democracy, e.g., some forms of African tribalism) have an equal, and probably greater claim to the virtues he heaped upon democracy.

In his cooption of all that is virtuous unto democracy, my colleague is not alone. This chameleon, protozoic tendency is evident throughout the adult education literature. Recall, for example, the claim by Brookfield and Lindeman that the democratic mind possesses and exhibits tolerance, vigor, imagination, sympathy, respect, humor, self-deprecation, reflectivity, passion, and skepticism, or their claim that democracy is the purpose of life and education (Brookfield, 1987).

Moreover, adult educators are not the only ones who engage in this cooption. Political theorists, Macpherson, for instance, is doing just that when he lumps such disparate political economies as the Soviet Union, the United States, and most Third World countries, under the democratic rubric. For Macpherson (1966), what unites these otherwise disparate polities under the democratic umbrella is the fact that "their ultimate goal is the same—to provide the conditions for the full and free development of the essential human capacities of all the members of the society" (pp. 36-37). Macpherson does not tell us exactly what he means by "free," but it seems reasonable to assume that he does not mean "absence from all forms of external constraints." Because if he did, that definition would rule out from the democratic family most political economies that Macpherson includes, such as the United States, East and West Germany, and the Soviet Union. I can only conclude, therefore, that Macpherson is using the term "free" rather loosely to mean "the absence of excessive force." Restated then, Macpherson is probably asserting that any and all political economies are democratic once their ultimate goal is to nurture the full development of their citizens without the use of excessive force.

But isn't the full development of their citizens (without the use of excessive force) the goal of most political systems? If we set aside, for a moment, their patriarchy and xenophobia, it can be argued that Plato, in his *Republic*, and Aristotle in his *Politics*, are both committed to the full development of citizens, without the use of excessive force. Their error is in their definition of citizens (to the exclusion of women and foreigners, for instance), not in their commitment to the principle of full development without excessive force. It is no secret that both men vigorously opposed democracy, while at the same time being seriously committed to nurturing full development of the polity. Similarly, it can be argued that Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, is equally committed to nurturing the full development of citizens, without the use of excessive force. But the system of government he advocates to do so is a monarchy, not democracy (Hobbes, 1968/1651).

Maybe it can be argued, as Western media commentators have done, that democracy does the job better. But there is no historical, etymological, or empirical basis for heaping unto democracy, alone, a commitment to the full and "free" development of human beings. This uncritical cooption, it seems, is rooted in our proclivity for a one best system. And democracy, being the protozoic beast that it has become, is well suited to assuming that ubiquitous role. Sadly, however, this proclivity breeds unquestioned adulation, and as Brookfield warns, unquestioned adulation of democracy bestows impunity upon those who proclaim to act in its name.

The Ethical Limits of Participatory Democracy

I believe in situational ethics, in the view that the ends justify the means. I am not looking for a one best system that is universally applicable in any and all situations. For me, participatory democracy is suitable only in *some* conciliatory situations—those that are consultative or mildly negotiative in nature. In such situations, stakeholders act, by and large, as allies. The parties know and trust each other, their common interests vastly outweigh conflicting ones, and interactants work in mutually supportive ways. Because of the absence of serious conflicts, conciliatory situations lend themselves most readily to the maximum participation of all stakeholders. However, I do encounter situations (as an educator) that are not as conciliatory. In these situations, I find it imprudent (even unethical) to take a participatory democratic approach. These more conflictive situations demand that I use my teacher authority (i.e., my superior power) most decisively. Two such situations come to mind: a) conciliatory situations requiring instructions; and b) conflictive situations requiring coercion. Below, I provide illustrations of these situations, but before I do, let me underscore: The illustrations I use below all involve the use of *legitimate* teacher authority—authority conferred by virtue of demonstrated professional competence, not mere titular power (Freire, 1998). My examples are not intended to suggest that those in authority (teachers or facilitators) are always right. Indeed, when teachers do not demonstrate professional competence students have every right to engage in civil disobedience. But that's another matter beyond the scope of this paper.

Instructing in Higher Education

This is an eye-witness account. I was one of the faculty involved in this situation. In a doctoral program in adult education somewhere in Midwestern USA, students were asked as one of their assignments to conduct a critical review of a research article. The presiding faculty (myself included) provided written guidelines concerning the review, and modeled what we meant by a critical review. Students were asked to work in teams on the assignment; each team was to select a journal article and critique it. The program insisted on not failing anyone. Instead, students were allowed to re-do assignments until they attained the requisite knowledge and/or skills. As the semester proceeded, students submitted drafts of their critical reviews and faculty provided frequent verbal and written feedback.

One of my colleagues was working with a student team that had chosen an article by Peter Drucker. Being the democratic loyalist that he is, he began giving the students feedback in the form of *suggestions,* not *instructions*. But as the semester proceeded, it became clear to my colleague that the student team was not taking his suggestions very seriously. Below is how he responded to the situation.

> This seems to have strayed very far from the purpose of the paper…In fact…it doesn't address the paper's instructions at all. The assignment is designed to give you a first crack at writing a brief critical review of a piece of research. Unless you learn how to do this you won't be able to do the critical review of literature portion of the [dissertation].

> But all I get from this piece is that you find Drucker's work "humbling", without any explanation as to why it is humbling. You finish by saying, in effect, you don't need to critique any literature, only your own study. But how can you critique your own study without taking literature into account? I don't understand this reasoning.
>
> So this assignment needs to be redone. I'd like you to bring a first version of a critique of a research study (take Drucker if you like) to the November weekend. I'll try to do a quick review of it so you can work on your critique of this critique for the December weekend. Please be advised, this is not a suggestion, it's a requirement. Hopefully the questions and categories of analysis I ran through at the September weekend will help. (Colleague's written correspondence)

One would have to stretch the definition of participatory democracy to breaking point to make the foregoing illustration fit. My colleague's written communication clearly represents an instance of privileging teacher authority over the will (maximum participation) of students. If the students were accorded maximum participation (as participatory democracy demands) they would certainly have continued their hedging. But who will argue that my colleague acted inappropriately? Who will make the case that he should have continued to consult with the students as to what they wanted to do? Which one of us really believes that the proper response in this situation was for my colleague to call a general assembly of students and teachers to debate (via a dialogic process) the merit and de-merits of the students' case? If we are honest, most of us will admit that my colleague acted appropriately. He ceased suggesting and instructed. Based on his authority (conferred by virtue of his superior and demonstrated knowledge and experience) my colleague directed the students' actions. Most of us would judge my colleague as irresponsible had he not, finally, taken a firm hand with the students.

Several months later, one of the students confided in me that the transaction described above was one of the critical learning moments in her graduate studies. One of the reasons she abstained from critiquing Drucker was fear of losing part of her professional identity. A lot of who she was, professionally, had been (up to that point) wrapped up in her uncritical acceptance of Drucker's ideas. She still loves Drucker, but she has now grown enough to critique his ideas. That student went on to conduct a praiseworthy dissertation on the learning organization in which she incorporated and, in my opinion, transcended, some of Drucker's ideas. I know this because I chaired her committee. But her earlier interaction with my colleague was probably more instructive to her than my two years of coaching. She owes a lot to my colleague for enforcing his privileged position and status. There is little doubt that his was an elitist's action—that he privileged his knowledge and position as a teacher over those of the students. To do so is to violate the fundamental tenet of participatory democracy—maximum participation of all stakeholders. Yet, most adult educators will applaud rather than denounce his actions.

The example given above merely touches the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, such authoritative actions are (and ought to be) the modus operandi of most formal educational settings, such as degree-granting programs. If we look more closely at the example given above, we may notice that much of the program bore this authoritative stamp. As with most degree-granting programs, the curriculum and syllabi had been designed by faculty, albeit with students' input. But students' input was decidedly advisory. Ultimate decisions rested with the faculty, as they should. And this is so because formal education (where there are designated teachers and students) is predicated in part on the assumption that teachers have salient expertise that students lack and need. It is in large measure this professional competence that gives us legitimacy as teachers. The teacher whose professional competence is less than that of her students is an imposter who should be relieved of her duties.[2] On this matter Freire (1998) rightly asserts:

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[2] I am not suggesting here that teachers pretend to know everything about a subject area, that they pretend to know more than students about every aspect of a subject, that they act as if they can't learn from their students, or that they be rude or insensitive in using their authority. I am suggesting that a teacher whose aggregate pedagogical and/or substantive expertise is less than that of her students lacks legitimacy.

> There is no such thing as teacher authority without competence. Teachers who do not take their own education seriously, who do not study, who make little effort to keep abreast of events have no moral authority to coordinate the activities of the classroom. (p. 85)

A teacher's professional competence, then (not her bossiness), is what confers upon her her superior authority. Consequently, she is ethically responsible to use that competence and corresponding authority to optimize her students' learning. The crucial question for the responsible teacher in situations like the one described above is not How can I be democratic in this situation? But rather, How can I optimize my students' learning? Quite often, to do so she must use the authority she has earned by virtue of her professional competence and status.

Decisive Leadership in Popular Education

We may concede that there is a legitimate place for using teacher authority in formal educational settings such as degree-granting institutions. But is there a legitimate place for the decisive use of authority in popular education? Susan Schauffele, a doctoral student in the adult education program at Penn State University, says a resounding yes, as she describes her popular education experience in Mexico during the summer of 1998. I give you Susan in her own words:

> Influenced, most likely, by our familiarity with the rhetoric of North American adult education and democracy, our group of predominantly North American students appeared to almost deify the notions of equality: everyone "deserved" an equal voice, which seemed to resist the idea that anyone would emerge with a special "leader" status. Much group effort and discussion time…focused on refining a democratic process, and many of the guest presentations supported this image of a leaderless, all-equals democratic process. Repeatedly we heard how the popular educators had initiated relationships with various communities without having had either preconceived agendas or objectives. The emerging emphasis seemed to portray the image of community members, who once they were en-

couraged by the presence of a popular educator, became self-directing—which would nullify the need for any individual leader or director. Based on this rhetoric, I had anticipated seeing community groups that were well-practiced in raising their own topics of discussion, identifying their own problems, and generating their own possible strategic responses, all on their own initiative.

In contrast, the scenarios I did see, while they were extremely impressive in their apparent efficacy, were not portrayals of discussions among equals. Both leaders and an accompanying respect for those leaders were apparent. A poignant illustration of the community's appreciation of the [decisive] leadership which Maria[3] seemed to demonstrate came by way of the title they used to address her: I noticed the women of Arima calling her 'Maestra.' These same women who met for seamstress classes came with respect for Maria's knowledge, experience, and ability to both respond helpfully to their questions and to show them, or even get them started, on the actual sewing projects.

Other evidence of Maria and her sister's, (Evelyn) [decisive] leadership surfaced during the group discussions among the women of the credit and savings groups. At Santa Cruz, Evelyn clearly led the discussion by proposing to the women that they consider using their money to invest in a new seed (i.e., garden) project. Although the other women who sat around the table joined the dialogue with experiential comments regarding the pros and cons of gardening as compared to other possible projects (such as pig husbandry), Evelyn's role as the one who steered the conversation remained distinct.

Similarly, in the groups where she presented the "How to Vote" posters, by virtue of both her "head-of-the-class" physical stance as well as her function—acting as principle speaker, using coaching type words to explain the voting process, inviting people to read

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[3] Pseudonyms (of persons and places) are used throughout this paper to protect people's privacy.

> phrases, and deciding when to pause to solicit group participation—she was the leader. It appeared clear to me that Maria and Evelyn acted as leaders whose voices of educated wisdom, lived practice, and contemplated experience carried the privilege of being permitted to offer advice and being permitted to incorporate some of their own personal opinions, ideas, and concerns into the group's agenda… (Susan's term paper, summer 1998)

The scenarios Susan paints above are quite familiar to most adult educators—responsible educators using their authority (superior knowledge, experience, and status) to guide learners. As any good educator, Maria and Evelyn listened, and were sensitive, to the participants. But there is no doubt about it, they exerted a superordinate (leadership) role, and everyone seemed to respect them for doing so. Most adult educators will applaud the actions of Maria and her sister, Evelyn. After all, what they did is exactly what most of us do on a daily basis in our practice. The problem, however, is that many adult educators would euphemistically label Maria and her sister's actions as instances of participatory democracy—never mind their superordinate roles. Driven by a liberal humanist philosophy with its unquestioned veneration of nonelitism, and the doctrine of maximum participation, many adult educators simply cannot bring themselves to legitimize any practice that places limits on people's participation even though, by their actions they are doing just that. As you shall see in the next section, this euphemism has been perpetuated by someone who has been dubbed "the most important educator of the last half of the 20th century," Paulo Freire (see foreword to Freire's *Pedagogy of Freedom* by Donaldo Macedo).

A Time to Coerce

In *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Paulo Freire (1998) tells a story of a young Brazilian professor who was afflicted for using his authority to restrain a disruptive student. This is how Freire relates the story.

> Recently, a young professor with democratic principles was telling me about what seemed to him as abuse in his way of handling au-

> thority. He told me with a certain air of affliction, that he reacted to the presence of a student from another class who was standing at the half-open door gesticulating to one of the students of his class. In fact he had to interrupt his teaching because of the disturbance. In so doing, he managed to focus attention on what was central, namely, his teaching activity and the climate necessary for its proper execution, to say nothing of his right and that of his students not to be interrupted by a clearly unacceptable expression of freedom without limits. Even so, he thought his decision had been arbitrary. Not so, in my view. In fact, not to have intervened amounted to a demonstration of a lack of real authority, an act of omission in the face of a clearly unacceptable and prejudicial intrusion into his teaching space. (pp. 95-96)

Paulo did not say what it is the young professor did to "execute his proper authority and right as a teacher." But it must have entailed at the very least some form of mild intimidation or censure. We may disagree with Paulo's interpretation and judgment in this particular case (I don't), but few of us will deny that there are times when it is most appropriate to *forcefully* exert our authority as educators. As a professor, I have had to forcefully remove a student from my class whose three cellular phones kept ringing off the hook. He was trafficking in drugs in my class. Colleagues have related to me horror stories of very disruptive racist or sexist students whom they have had to literally shut up.

I witnessed a situation (in post-apartheid South Africa) in which a group of educators was escorted at gunpoint from a white farmer's property. Our crime? We were seeking to gain information from his black workers concerning their educational and other needs so that we might develop relevant programs to meet those needs. This incident happened on a Sunday, the workers' only day off. And, with the spate of violent and fatal hate crimes we have been witnessing across schools and universities in the United States recently, it is not far-fetched to anticipate that the South African situation described above may repeat itself in our otherwise tranquil halls of learning. These, and other *fiercely negotiative* or *combative* situations demand that as educators we exercise our authority decisively and forcefully.

I must digress a bit to say something about the nature of the situations I am now describing. Educational situations like the one encountered by the young Brazilian professor are quite different from the ones discussed earlier. The former was conciliatory. For instance, the students' refusal to do the critique stemmed from their fear of losing their identity, not from any principled disagreement with my colleague. And in the popular education case, the participants willingly submitted to the leadership of Maria and Evelyn. These situations I am now describing are very different. I refer to them as fiercely negotiative or even combative. Here, people treat each other as enemies, not allies or friends. An enemy is someone who "seeks the injury, overthrow, or failure of a person or thing to which he [sic] is opposed…" (*Webster's Dictionary*, 1986, p. 750). People are considered enemies, not because they (necessarily) exhibit unsavory emotions towards, each other. As *Webster's* reminds us, two otherwise loving brothers may be political enemies. People are enemies because they pursue goals that are antithetical—if one party wins, the other parties to the transaction must (of necessity) lose. To illustrate: if the disruptive student Freire describes succeeded in what he wanted to do, it would have been to the detriment of what the young professor wanted to achieve. It is in that sense (and that sense alone) that they are enemies.

I distinguish between fiercely negotiative and combative situations. In the former, talks have not broken down, so to speak; there is still a sliver of recognizable common interest, respect, and/or trust that tenuously keeps the opposing parties 'at the table.' In combative situations, however, talks have broken down, distrust is open and rampant, the battle lines are drawn, and opposing sides seek actively, freely, and knowingly to frustrate each other's causes.

Now let us return to our Brazilian illustration. I agree with Freire that the young Brazilian professor was justified in using his authority, and that to do otherwise would have been irresponsible. The problem, however, is that Freire labels the action of the young professor as democratic. Now, Freire is a strong advocate of nonelitism and of full and unqualified participation of all learners. In the same book (Freire, 1998), for instance, he castigates elitism as a "hypocritical perversion" (p. 23). And throughout his writings, when Freire speaks of participation of the people, he speaks of it with unqualified adulation (Freire, 1970; 1995; 1998; Horton & Friere, 1990). One is hard pressed to find in Freire's writings an *articulated* support for restricting the participation of learners he refers to as 'the people.' This passage in *We Make the Road by Walking* typifies Horton and Freire's position on the issue:

> The more people participate in the process of their education, the more the people participate in the process of defining what kind of production to produce, and for what and why, the more the people participate in the development of their selves [sic]. The more people become themselves, the better the democracy. The less people are asked about what they want, about their expectations, the less democracy we have" (1990, pp 145-146).

I wish to note three points about this passage. First, democracy is considered by Freire to be a self-evident good. The full title of the book from which the above passage comes is: *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Yet, nowhere in the entire book does Freire define democracy, nor does he make any attempt throughout the book to justify his obvious adulation of democracy. The closest Freire comes to a definition of democracy is in his discussion of *coherently democratic authority*. Listen to how he does his intellectual sleight of hand. With no previous discussion about the meaning or origin of the concept, *democratic authority,* Freire writes: "Let us begin by reflecting on a few qualities that democratic authority in teaching needs to incorporate in its relationship with freedom of the students" (p. 84). Then, without warning, he updates the term two pages later to *coherently* democratic authority (p. 86). Then in the next several pages without a shred of justification, Freire heaps upon coherently democratic authority such virtues as: self-confidence, professional competence, generosity, humility, and commitment. Over and over again, Freire goes trawling into the sea of humanity and snatches from its jaws the best of virtues, and then heaps them (as if self-evidently) unto his coherently democratic authority:

> Coherently democratic authority, founded on the certainty and on the importance both of itself and the freedom of the students, will never minimize freedom and yet will be dedicated to the construction of genuine discipline…
>
> Coherently democratic authority carries the conviction that true discipline does not exist in the muteness of those who have been silenced but in the stirrings of those who have been challenged, in the doubt of those who have been prodded, and in the hopes of those who have been awakened…
>
> Coherently democratic authority recognizes the ethical basis of our presence in the world and necessarily recognizes that it is not possible to live ethically without freedom and that there is no such thing as freedom without risk…
>
> Coherently democratic authority does not usually sin by omission. On the one hand it refuses to silence the students, and on the other hand, it rejects any inhibition of the process of constructing good discipline.
>
> At the heart of the experience of coherently democratic authority is a basic, almost obsessive dream: namely, to persuade or convince freedom of its vocation to autonomy as it travels the road of self-construction, using materials from within and without, but elaborated over and over again. (pp. 86-87)

Freire ends by unselfconsciously stipulating that coherently democratic authority is the balance between boundless freedom and authoritarianism.

> It's interesting to note how people who are fond of being authoritarian often think of the respect that is indispensable for freedom as a sort of incorrigible taste for the spontaneous. And those who imagine freedom to have no limits are forever discovering authoritarianism in every legitimate manifestation of authority. The undoubtedly correct position, though the most difficult, is the *democratic* one,

> coherent in its utopian pursuit of solidarity and equality. Here, it is not possible to have authority without freedom or vice versa. (Freire, 1998, p. 99, emphasis mine)

For Freire, as with most adult educators, democracy needs no definition. It is a self-evident and universal good. Second, although Freire does not bother to articulate a conception of democracy, his emphasis on maximum participation of 'the people,' and his unqualified abhorrence of elitism suggest a strong preference to *participatory* democracy. Third, for Freire, participation is always a good thing. The more people participate, the more they become themselves, and the more they become themselves, the better the democracy. There seems to be a contraction here, one that Freire refuses to address. On the one hand Freire advocates unbridled participation of 'the people.' On the other, he sanctions restraint—as in the Brazilian illustration given above. To restrain someone is to curb his or her participation. Yet Freire at once advocates restraint and unbridled participation without making any attempt to address what seems to me to be an obvious contradiction.

How could Freire get away with such contradiction? The answer, I believe, is twofold. First, the hallowed status of democracy accords impunity to its loyal subjects. Freire is absolved of the responsibility to explain what seems to me to be a glaring contradiction in his thoughts and actions simply by assigning to them the democratic label.

Second, Freire's liberal humanism prevents him from openly legitimizing coercion even though he tacitly supports it. *Webster's Dictionary* defines coercion as the "use of physical or moral force to compel to act or assent" (1986, p. 439). To coerce, then, is to prevent someone from doing what he would otherwise have done, or to cause him to do what he would not have voluntarily done—regardless of the means one uses, be they physical, moral, psychological, and so on. In Freire's account above, the young professor is clearly, and intentionally, coercive. Freire fully supports the professor's coercive action, but his liberal humanism will not permit him to use the term or any synonym of it. So he transmogrifies the obviously coercive action of the young Brazilian professor into the more palatable but grotesque thing he calls *coherent democratic authority*. This 'democratic' transmogrification accomplishes two purposes: it legitimizes coercion without Freire having to use the term, and it absolves Freire of having to explain the glaring contradiction inherent in his simultaneous advocacy of unbridled participation and measured restraint. In the same text Freire (1998) provides yet another example of his liberal humanist loyalties. Using parenting as a metaphor for educating, Freire admonishes:

> It is clear, of course, that adolescents do not always make the best decisions regarding their future. For that reason it is important for parents to take part in discussions about the future plans of their children. They cannot, ought not, deny that they must know and assume that the future of their children belongs to their children and not to their parents. In my view, it's preferable to emphasize the children's freedom to decide, even if they run the risk of making a mistake, than to simply follow the decision of the parents…
>
> The position of a mother or father is that of someone who, without any risk of her or his authority, is able to accept, humbly, the extremely important role of adviser to their son or daughter. And as an adviser, will *never* impose a decision or become angry because the parental point of view was not accepted. (pp. 97-98, emphasis mine)

Even if a mother knows that the action (or inaction) of her adolescent son will result in death or irreparable physical or psychological injury to himself or others, according to Freire, that knowledge is not sufficient for her to justifiably impose her will upon him. For Freire, there is never a situation in which parents could justifiably impose their will upon their teenagers. And since Freire provides this illustration in relation to the appropriate use of teacher authority, it stands to reason that he is also implying that there are no conditions under which it is appropriate for a teacher to force her will upon a student.

Here again we see the contradiction. On the one hand Freire applauds the young professor for imposing his will upon the disruptive students; on the other, he argues that under no condition is it appropriate for a teacher to impose her will on students. That's what the sanctity of democracy can do for its loyal subjects—they can eat their cake and have it. With relative impunity, they can say one thing and do another.

However palatable this liberal humanism might seem, its armor is quite penetrable. Liberal humanism (as depicted in Freire) leaves its followers open to the justifiable charge of speaking with forked tongues. It leaves them with little or no basis for advocating coercion when the occasion demands it (as in the case of the young professor). And most important, liberal humanism shrinks (unnecessarily) the range of pedagogical options open to its loyal subjects. Given their aversion to any form of coercion or imposition, liberal humanists such as Freire must relegate their pedagogy strategies to advisements and suggestions, or to the sheepish (and therefore ineffectual) use of coercive strategies. My illustrations, I hope, have demonstrated that there are times when coercion is the most ethical pedagogical option. Trouble is, entirely lacking from our educational arsenal is a pedagogy of coercion. Below I propose the rudiments of such a pedagogy.

Toward a Pedagogy of Ethical Coercion

Our educational literature is saturated with theories, and strategies aimed at empowering, transforming and liberating people (see, for instance, Brookfield, 1995; Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1992). In none of them, however, is there any explicit support for any form of coercion. In fact, many of them explicitly denounce it. However, although we loathe its explicit legitimation and use, most educators covertly employ coercion. For instance, we coerce students to maintain quality, to prevent individuals from being disruptive, and so on. Maybe we recoil from overtly sanctioning coercion for fear of being labeled arrogant or inhumane. Or maybe we flinch from the idea because we are guided by the liberal humanism described above. Perhaps some of us believe that evil is unnatural, a distortion of human nature—distorted by ignorance and external control. Perhaps we believe that if people were left to "grow wild and free" that their conduct and obligations would always be honorable. Perhaps there are educators who believe in the absolute goodness of human beings, who, like Carl Rogers (1983), are convinced that "the basic nature of the human being, when functioning freely is constructive and trustworthy" (p. 292). Perhaps there are educators who remain firm in their conviction that people do evil deeds, either because they do not really know better, or because they are not really free to pursue the good. Maybe some of us assume that people will act right once they are free, critical thinkers. Construing humans in these ways allows us to re-frame our enemies as misguided foes or allies, refashion vice as failure and mistakes, and recast our ethical responsibilities in merely epistemic terms, i.e., the development of critical consciousness (Brookfield, 1995, Freire, 1973, Mezirow, 1991, Shor, 1996, Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

These reasons, however, have not stopped us from coercing people. Our basic common sense seems to run counter to our humanistic moorings. The problem, I believe, is not with our common sense, but rather with our humanist loyalty. Ridding ourselves of this burden may free us up not only to legitimize the coercive measures we are already using, but also to embrace new and more effective coercive strategies. Below I provide a summary of some of these strategies together with situations in which they may be ethically employed.

Appropriate Forms of Ethical Coercion

To be ethical and prudent, the coercive strategies we employ must vary in form and severity, depending on the level of conflict, what is at stake, and the power and resources at our disposal. They may be physical or non-physical, mild (intending, for instance, to misinform), or severe (intending, for instance, to restrain or incapacitate). Coercive strategies may be classified as credible force, intimidation, or manipulation.

Credible force

Credible force is force (physical, political, military, legal, etc.) sufficient to prevent someone from carrying out her wishes. Credible force should be our absolute last resort—used only in combative situations where negations have broken down and people's lives and/or well-being are seriously threatened. It's time to use credible force, for instance, when a student gets up in front of a class and starts shooting at his classmates. It is time to use credible force when irate enemies 'go ballistic' at a public meeting because they can't have it all their way. But I must caution, if you must use force, then make sure it is credible, that is to say, it is force sufficient to neutralize the enemy. If not, then I suggest that you resort to intimidation. Intimidation is far more effective than the use of noncredible force.

Intimidation

Intimidation is the *threat* (as opposed to use) of credible force. Educators use this strategy more often than they are wont to admit. Educators (and parents) use it frequently to restore order to situations that are about to get out of hand. In the above account retold by Freire, if the young professor did not resort to credible force, then he must have used some form of intimidation. My colleague also used intimidation in his written communication to the student: "Please be advised, this is not a suggestion, it's a requirement." This is a threat if I ever saw one. My colleague knew that behind that statement was the backing of the entire political, legal, and physical weight of the institution. The students knew that too. I must hasten to add, however, that at no time during this entire episode was my colleague rude or disrespectful to the students. Notice his dialogical posture even while issuing the directive.

> So this assignment needs to be redone. I'd like you to bring a first version of a critique of a research study (take Drucker if you like) to the November weekend. I'll try to do a quick review of it so you can work on your critique of this critique for the December weekend. Please be advised, this is not a suggestion, it's a requirement. Hopefully the questions and categories of analysis I ran through at the September weekend will help. (Colleague's written correspondence)

Sure, the students weren't given a choice. They *had* to re-do the assignment, and to my colleague's specifications. However, my colleague left room for the students to critique his critique. Way to go!! Intimidation, then, need not always be hostility. I suspect, though, that the young professor in Freire's story was not as conciliatory and dialogical as my colleague, nor should he have been.

Threat may be symbolic, as with a verbal warning or ridicule, or tangible, as with an actual show of force. The way I dealt with the student who was drug trafficking in my class was to get "in his face" during class break and threaten to "beat the shit out of him." He could sense I wasn't joking. But he could also sense my genuine concern for his well-being. (I must confess, I wasn't sure what would happen, but I had to do something, and I did not wish to have the student expelled.) His attitude changed drastically (for the better) after our confrontation. Up to that point in time, he was failing the course. He ended up with a B minus.

Manipulation

We manipulate when, through fencing, deception, posturing, concealment, misinformation, etc., we deny others the resources (e.g., knowledge, skills, material resources) they would otherwise use to frustrate our cause (Newman, 1994). The need to manipulate may not occur often in higher education (although I don't rule it out), but it surely does in nonformal situations such as community development work. To illustrate, in 1996 I was involved in a project aimed, ultimately, at cleaning up and redeveloping an area of Chicago's south side. The area had been ravaged by chemical/industrial pollution and urban out-migration. The partners involved in the project included a consortium of community-based organizations and nongovernmental agencies representing disaffected Chicago south-side communities; my university and another state university; the United States Environmental Protection Agency; the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the City of Chicago Planning, Environmental and Housing Divisions.

According to the grant proposal (which was funded by the United States Department of Education), our task there as adult educators was to assist community groups "to organize and implement a leadership development program…through non-formal adult education to train community citizens…" Very early on, it became clear to us adult educators that the so-called community was quite divided. Some groups were interested in long-term sustainable development, some in short term employment generation, some merely in stopping the hemorrhage (chemical pollution) that was poisoning their children and devaluing their properties, and still others merely in increasing their economic and political power base. Added to the confusion were the government agencies that were more intent on controlling the money and decisions than in truly partnering with the communities.

In this maelstrom I found myself trying to please everyone. My humanist sensibilities prevented me from taking a stance with the group I had come to realize was most committed to the community's long term interest. Ruth, the director of that, group urged me to cast my lot with her but I would have none of it. I was supposed to stay neutral and (through conciliatory measures only) bring all parties together. To take a stance with Ruth and her group meant that I would have had to go "undercover" sometimes; conceal information sometimes; fence, posture, in a word, manipulate. But I was too much of a democrat to engage in such funny stuff. Trying to stay neutral, however, I succeeded only in playing into the hands of the government officials and their lackeys in the community. They played me like a fiddle, pretending in public to be conciliatory, but wheeling and dealing in private. Ruth knew this and would warn me about how gullible I was. I did not listen to her. By the time I had left the project to take a job in another of state, the government officials and their lackeys in the community had seized complete control of the project, and had virtually given its oversight back to some of the same people who were responsible for the pollution in the first place. Ruth and her group are still struggling with the bastards. And to her credit, she still talks to me and keeps me abreast from time to time, of what's going on.

As a professor from a university with a good reputation in the community, I did have some limited power in that situation. But I did not use it effectively because I let my democratic sensibilities prevent me from adopting the most effective strategy at my disposal—manipulation. And because I didn't, I was played for a fool. Ruth laughs at me every now and then when we talk about it on the phone. I can laugh at myself now. too. But I hope I learned something—that I ought not always be neutral; that sometimes I have to take a stand; and that when I take a stand it might mean I have to engage in some form of manipulation—some fencing, posturing, concealment, maneuvering, misinformation and even deception as the case demands, if I hope to be effective.

Conclusion

In this paper I had no interest in assessing the merits or de-merits of various democratic variants. Nor was I necessarily concerned with the *attainability* of democracy, however defined. Our ideals are not meant to be attained. They are ever faraway beacons, giving hope, direction, and impetus to human conduct. If we achieve them, we have set them too low. As such, failure to attain the democratic ideal is not a sufficient reason to give up its pursuit. My concern was rather to articulate the ethical limits of *participatory* democracy—the variant advocated by most adult educators. My central question was: Are there educational conditions under which participatory democracy is undesirable, even if it is perfectly attainable?

In response, I argued that participatory democracy distinguished itself from other democratic variants by its doctrine of nonelitism, and its goal of maximum, direct participation. I believe, however, that as adult educators, we often find ourselves in situations requiring the use of teacher authority to instruct or even to coerce. But to employ our teacher authority in such decisive ways is to violate the principles of non-elitism and maximum, direct participation. Our common sense tells us that instructing and coercing are the right things to do sometimes, but our humanistic sensibilities cause us to flinch from doing so. The upshot is either denial or ineffectual action—we deny that we are being coercive when our actions clearly are; or we engage in weak and ineffectual forms of coercion because we have no way to legitimize them.

The solution, I believe, is to trust our common sense—to admit that participatory democracy is not a one best system. There are times when its employment is inappropriate. There are situations, when, as teachers, it is most ethical to be elitist—that is to say, to decisively apply our authority (conferred upon us by virtue of our professional competence) to instruct or to restrain. In the final analysis, the question for the responsible teacher is not How can I be democratic in this or that situation? But rather, How might I foster the greatest good in this situation? Experienced educators know that to do so sometimes involves using their teacher authority decisively to instruct (not just advise), and sometimes to coerce.

This paper merely sketches an outline of a pedagogy of ethical coercion. My speculations and anecdotes must be bolstered by more systemic research. Through critical ethnography, for instance, we might try to ascertain how adult educators reconcile the seeming contradiction between their advocacy of unbridled participation and their practice of measured restraint, between their unqualified advocacy of participatory democracy and their belief that it is sometimes okay to restrict the actions of their students. We might try to determine whether and to what extent educators, in their role as educators, in fact coerce others. And if we find that adult educators, indeed, coerce others, we might try to ascertain the types and levels of coercion they use, under what situations, and how they justify their actions. How, for instance, do adult educators explain and justify their decisive use of teacher authority? What forms and levels of coercion do they find acceptable in the exercise of teacher authority? How do their contexts and active positionalities frame the ways in which they understand and employ their authority as teachers? What explains the gap between their rhetoric and actual practice of coercion? What would our theories of teaching and learning look like if they were to incorporate a pedagogy of ethical coercion with its emphasis on decisive use of teacher authority, and the neutralization of enemies? For instance, what would feminist or African-centered pedagogies, conscientization or perspective transformation, andragogy or self-directed learning, and so on, look like if each were to incorporate a pedagogy of ethical coercion? This list of research questions is by no means exhaustive. But I hope it provides some direction for colleagues interested in exploring how they might become better teachers as they toil in the midst of trouble.

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Adult Learning and American Political Debate: Achieving Political Literacy Today

Ronald Aronson and Karen McDevitt

As Paulo Freire (1972) insisted, empowering adult learners includes simultaneously increasing their social strength and political participation no less than building their individual sense of self-confidence and ability to handle life's vicissitudes. To become more literate means improving one's "reading" of the day's political processes and discussions—following what is going on "out there" in the world, understanding it critically, appreciating the underlying forces at work, clarifying issues. If literacy involves learning to think critically, political literacy entails voicing one's concerns in the wider political world, and this means finding one's *own* voice.

Concern for political literacy takes on special meaning today because of the huge drop in political participation in the United States over the past twenty years. The most widely noticed trend is summarized in the fact that only 54.2% of all registered voters participated in the 1996 election, compared to 69.3% in 1964. Equally important, however, is that participation levels mirror literacy levels. U.S. Bureau of Census Voting and Registration (1997) statistics confirm that in the last presidential election year only 29.9% of individuals without a high school diploma voted, in contrast to 49.1% of high school graduates and 72.6% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher. If more and more Americans are opting out of the political process, the less educated are barely participating at all.

It may be debated how far this is due to the absence of vital mass political movements on the one hand, and the dominance of big money and advertising in political campaigns on the other. Whatever its causes, political cynicism—which seems to become more widespread with each election—discourages citizenship participation. Those who believe in the connections between literacy, adult education, and political participation may find themselves more and more discouraged, inclined to settle for narrow if important educational projects, helping individuals whenever possible. Yet, achieving genuine political literacy depends upon a training and a modeling that are the opposite of passive or otherwise contemplative approaches to political education—those that take a step back from social processes in order to study them reflectively and develop critical consciousness but then go no further. Adult educators who persist in taking up this challenge are faced with the question: How, in this society, today, is it possible to actually pursue political literacy in a meaningful way?

Citizenship, in the form of participation, entails active, demanding, critically minded and vocal people. Their interests and needs must enter into the larger political process, but will do so only to the extent that these are clearly articulated. In this sense, we are advocating engaging in, rather than retreating from, political arguments, not simply spreading knowledge about the political process, but actively inviting citizenship participation. By engaging students with their own values assumptions (not avoiding them or pretending to be neutral), we not only promote their comprehension of contradictory political, social, and economic views, but we can also help involve adult learners in the process of finding their own voice. Behind our broad, humanistic, and nonpartisan educational goal lies a democratic conviction: that everyone's voice matters and should be heard.

Creating Right versus Left Debates: The Rationale

The authors have been involved in a citizenship education project as well as a university course that speak to some of the issues involved in helping adults find their voice politically. We would like to describe our two public debates and a course, taught three times, all of which stem from the founding of the Center for Democratic Values, a nonprofit organization originally modeled as the think-tank of the Democratic Socialists of America. Rooted in progressive values, CDV was established in part to foster an intellectual presence in public debates in the United States—one willing to debate first principles. It especially seeks to articulate the ideas that all people are of equal worth and share a fundamental sense of human solidarity, all individuals possess the right and potential to flourish individually and socially, and that society is responsible for creating the conditions for such flowering.

Although we initially saw promoting a series of national debates as offering a chance to find an audience for Left ideas we shared, it soon became clear that the meanings of such a project stretched well beyond this particular goal and beyond any particular place on the political spectrum. In talking about our "Left versus Right" debate proposals with media people, possible funders, college and university colleagues and administrators, and potential debaters on all sides, we found that most everyone's interest and enthusiasm matched our own, and that we collectively shared a broad set of goals that dovetailed with our own commitment to adult political education.

Our strongest common concern was about the coarsening of debate in the United States over the past generation, especially the angry refusal to genuinely discuss ideas, issues, and policies without questioning the other side's morality. Perhaps morality has always been an undertone in democratic politics; however, recent political finger-wagging on all sides has made it seem that there is little to talk about on key issues—especially with those people who could, for example, support or oppose welfare, support or oppose abortion, support or oppose affirmative action.

Adding to the general short-temperedness is the tendency, especially due to the all-pervasiveness of the media and of marketing, to reduce complex issues to sound-bites. Political arguments get voiced through emotional claims rather than by making serious intellectual points. As mature adults are too often addressed as if they were elementary schoolchildren. However, believing that ideas matter, and that so too does an actively informed citizenry—as did everyone we spoke with in the process of arranging our debates—entails a much more intelligent and demanding approach. Inproposing debates, we were comfortable with a project that sought to voice the concerns of those who have no voice in today's public discourse, and to create a genuine discussion about current social issues. Debates, seriously conceived and carefully prepared, sponsored by a variety of groups and presented in several venues, offer promise. There are also theoretical reasons for framing issues to promote Left versus Right debates. To clarify people's contrasting outlooks, as well as the underlying meaning of different policy options, it is often necessary to begin by drawing sharp lines and by listening to distinct voices. First, as Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio (1996) argues, Left and Right are more or less permanent poles of all political thought. Bobbio takes the first as being concerned with fostering greater equality, the second with accepting greater inequality. Bobbio argues that these two fundamental dispositions recur no matter what the social policy discussion. His clear and careful reassertion of this fundamental difference as it was being buried drew a powerful response in Italy. In terms of the United States, Bobbio helps explain contrasting ways of thinking that mark virtually every issue, including, for example, the question of the budget surplus, as reflecting fundamentally different, and always-recurring worldviews.

Second, as George Lakoff (1996) argues, people develop opposing worldviews that in turn reflect complex values, and familial and social processes that are not likely to go out of existence soon. In *Moral Politics*, Lakoff spells out two opposing gestalts that, he argues, help explain opposing political discourse in the United States, the "strict father" and "nurturant parent" models. For Lakoff, these provide a psycholinguistic explanation of people's political inclinations. We may disagree with specifics of the picture Lakoff draws, but the important point is that people act politically in relation to worldviews, and that these cluster around two basic poles, Left and Right.

Bobbio and Lakoff lend support to the United States polling data: Left and Right may wax and wane but do not disappear. As Herbert McClosky and John Zaller (1984) point out in *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy*, a substantial basis exists both in American public philosophy and in popular attitudes for political projects that would be considered on the Left by any standard. Currently, more people regard themselves as "conservative" than "liberal," especially after an effective two decades-long conservative campaign to discredit the word "liberal." Yet, both poles endure as core constituencies of the major US political parties, and neither one is going away anytime soon.

There has been little organized will to help people articulate and clarify their own spontaneous reactions to events, and *then* to develop the corresponding programmatic proposals. The decline of participatory politics may mean, above all, that few members of the "political class" are willing to articulate new policies that faithfully reflect how large numbers of people think and feel if given the chance. At least today.

In short, the current state of political discourse actually silences a significant part of the population—just as conservatives rightly felt silenced during the postwar high-tide of American liberalism (Hodgson, 1996). Moreover, this situation impedes political thought as well as participation by depriving society as a whole of the opportunity to clarify the meaning of its priorities and various policy alternatives. A reinvigorated discussion of alternatives is needed to remove the torpor as well as the meanness from what passes for political discourse today. In the long term, both Right and Left will benefit from a more civilized and intelligent discourse, and, more important, everyone else will benefit. A politically literate citizenry is integral to developing this discourse.

Why We Need to Talk About Values

Recent years have seen an alarming devaluing of public life and the belief in a common good. Not only have voting rates been dropping while cynicism about politics and community has been growing, idealism has been waning, and "the good life" is being defined in increasingly personal and private ways. One of the most destructive consequences of these processes is their debilitating effect on democracy. More and more people seem resigned to letting others decide for them. There is a growing tendency not only to see political issues as too technical for ordinary citizens, but also as too involved for anyone who doesn't have a pressing personal or economic interest or isn't a "political person." The Europeans increasingly talk about the "political class." In the United States we might think in terms of those who organize their lives and careers around the political realm, running for or holding office, those who work for them, or those who lobby them on this or that issue, or who occupy themselves professionally with these processes, such as journalists and television commentators. In other words, there is a distinct group that seeks and holds power, or that concerns itself with understanding and influencing those who do.

Beyond these, the relatively small audience for their pronouncements or writings or telecasts consists of those who take an active interest in politics and elections—usually highly educated and well-off, or actively involved in organizations with political goals, such as corporations and trade unions. The rest of the population—a wide majority—is not only less involved, but appears to be less educated, more pressed by economic problems, and generally less literate. Overwhelmingly, members of the first group vote in elections; the reverse is true for the second group. And yet in both groups are people responsive to a different approach, those who are motivated by fairness or social justice, committed to active citizenship, determined to participate, and instinctively dedicated to mentoring others and involving them actively. The problem is how to inspire the politically passive to actively involve themselves. Any approach that seeks to go to the root of the problem must concern itself not merely with the act of voting, but with helping individuals find their voice and empowering them to participate.

Values, worldviews, and popular philosophy matter today because they increasingly form the basis of public conversation. If President Clinton has been impeached in part due to his values, it is also true that he has been acquitted by individuals who carefully examined their own set of values. Those who wish to participate in political life in America today will have to talk about values. Here we are suggesting an even more compelling reason for values-talk: a democratic process demands thinking and rethinking our country's starting points themselves, not only program and vision, but right down to reconstructing a sense of who "we" want to become. We need to talk about values as a way of connecting with our deepest human convictions.

By participating in values-talk, adult learners not only examine their individual beliefs, but they also help construct the terrain on which their own voice can be heard. Long-term trends in American life today engender a concern for "where we are headed" in terms that lead naturally to discussions about values. To be any sort of force, social action needs a sense of identity, a programmatic direction and a source of hope, and the ability to answer such questions as: Who are we, what do we want, and why are we hopeful of achieving it? Through dialogical action we have access to a deep source of identity: what people believe and what they want for themselves and their children. Engaging in political dialogue and focusing that dialogue back on values allows for identifying who "we" are, not in a demographic or programmatic way, but in terms of our shared belief about what matters most. Citizenship education must engage in clarifying value positions in relation to a cluster of persistent themes including both equality and inequality and social and individual responsibility.

These starting points contain a message of individual and collective power and entail a way of thinking about political literacy as pursuing democracy and equality. Political literacy is a process that needs to stress neither the individual over the collective nor vice-versa. The richest individual life can be lived only within a far stronger and freer sense of community than now exists, and the richest community life depends on the fullest development of all individuals. As Freire (1972) asks, "How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others?" (p. 79). Achieving political literacy today in the U.S. for adult learners means illuminating all sides of the political arena without demonization and with respect for the individual as well as the community.

At the same time, we must be attentive to how far community life has changed over time, and also acknowledge that current arrangements are less facts of nature than they are the result of specific social relations, including relations of power. Social transformation occurs by people acting together. Individual and social life today can be, and thus should be, more free and communitarian, democratic, and egalitarian than it is or has ever been.

Dialogic Action and Political Literacy

So much for the broad reasons and themes of debate. If we as adult educators turn to the audience and understand debates as a political literacy project focusing on our target audience of adults, the directions of the project become further clarified. We see the debate process not as one in which the audience simply *watches*, but rather as one of plunging people into the process of trying to figure out where *they* stand in relation to what the debaters are saying. The point is not at all that one side or the other eventually receives a better score, but that a many-sided process of genuine political education takes place. Ultimately, the process should aid all participants in learning how to say clearly what they believe—to articulate effectively core ideas and values, their underlying sense of right and wrong—and to do so in the heat of arguing with the opposition.

In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire emphasizes that education and knowledge are "processes of inquiry" achieved through communication (p. 58). Although his observations are historically situated, aligned to the specific education of oppressed peoples, and focus on the teacher-student relationship, Freire's theories can be linked in a number of ways to a broader concept of citizenship education. First, Freire defines the importance of critical thinking and the significance of dialogue. Critical thinking "perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity...Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking" (p. 81). In Freire's terms, "dialogical action," based on the tenets of cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis, provides the basis for a problem-posing education that is rooted in communication, not domination.

For Freire, "banking education" (whereby the role of the teacher is to deposit information into the objectified student) defeats the possibilities for authentic thinking. "Authentic thinking," stresses Freire, "thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication" (p. 64). Likewise, genuine political literacy cannot be achieved without participatory strategies for achieving a critical consciousness. These strategies include dialogue, debate, and evaluation.

Not unlike Freire's methodology of *conscientizacao*, the development of political literacy consists of learning to comprehend opposing views and to speak out against what one perceives to be injustices. In other words, political literacy is not about simply expressing one's opinion against something or someone; instead, it is rooted in the heart of understanding contradictions. Only by learning to focus on the space between opposing views are we able to unearth where meaning is being made. Put another way, just as Freire proposes that authentic education takes place not via "A" for "B" nor "A" about "B," but rather "A" with "B," genuine political literacy can only be achieved by examining one side of a political argument with another (p. 81). It is based on *listening* to the voices of many individuals, on promoting tolerance, and embracing the larger social good.

Indeed any discussion lacking the presence of at least two clearly articulated sides can easily become reduced to a level of simplistic assertion. Without all sides speaking, one side attains control over the discourse in key areas. Real discussion becomes impossible and there is no room for political participation. Political literacy then becomes a process of observing *others* state *their* views. Such passive learning is not literacy at all.

Two Debates

The first Left/Right debate we organized was held at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, on November 6, 1997. The topic, "Does the American Economy Serve Democratic Values," was argued by Cornel West (Harvard University) and Barbara Ehrenreich (author most recently of *Blood Rites*) on the Left, and Stuart Butler (Heritage Foundation) and David Frum (author of *Dead Right*) on the Right. The debate was held in conjunction with the national convention of Democratic Socialists of America, of which West and Ehrenreich are Honorary Co-chairs, and a related conference, on the theme of "Arguing with the Right."

The debate was attended by over 900 people, including a large number of African Americans brought out by the Columbus Urban League, as well as supporters of the Ohio State Federalist Society and the Democratic Socialists of America. Capital instructors assigned their students to attend. The topic was developed in advance among the four participants as a "values" topic, both because such discussions have become more and more common in the United States as initiated from the Right, and because the Left wanted to test itself on such a topic. Winning a coin toss, the Right, taking the affirmative, spoke first. After four constructive speeches and four rebuttals, the floor was open to questions directed alternately to the Left and the Right. After twenty minutes of questions, the participants made final rebuttals.

The audience largely favored the Left, but there were also strong pockets of support for the Right. Each side seemed to divide between a broadly philosophical speaker and one more focused on economic issues: Frum and West played the first role, Butler and Ehrenreich the second. Frum spoke broadly about the effectiveness of the American economy and the horrors of government services, West about the Left's historic advancement of democratic values, Butler about the Right's goal of privatizing social security, and Ehrenreich about the ways in which economic inequality undermines democracy. West was clearly the most popular of the four, although each of the four had strong supporters in the audience. The question period began with great intensity, lines of people clustering behind the "Left" and "Right" microphones. The questioners clearly had an axe to grind, most usually against the Right, but were well-prepared and thoughtful.

As the question period showed, the debate was a dramatic process, encouraging audience identification with one side or the other. Many of the questioners tried to help their side or damage the other. The cheers and boos in the house showed how involved the audience had become, and how strong was their identification with one side or the other. On the whole, it was a well-fought debate, and a dramatic and exciting process. The morning after the debate, Guy Molyneux of Peter Hart Research led a group of Capital University students in analyzing the debate. The students identified each side's strategies along with its resulting success or failure. Somewhat surprisingly, it became clear to those in this post-debate session that the process of *evaluation* was as integral to the promotion of a Left/Right dialogue as was the debate itself. By taking a close look at who was speaking, what was said, and how it was presented, we were able to separate said, and how it was presented, we were able to separate significant points from simplistic sound-bites and we began to grasp our own (mis)understanding of the issues addressed. Most remarkably, the evaluators seemed to agree that insofar as the debate was over values, the Left won, but insofar as it became a debate on economic policy—pushed hard by the Right, especially Butler—the Right won the debate.

C-SPAN taped the debate and then aired it at the beginning of 1998 (*Does the American Economy Serve Democratic Values?).* Viewing it even today, one cannot but be struck by its energy, even though the debaters are arguing a fairly subtle question, namely the relationship of the economy to democratic values. The issues were clearly important to those attending, and one could sense them hanging on the answers, perhaps even forming their own answers and testing them against those of their and the other side. If many in the audience identified either with one side or the other, or with an individual debater, they seemed to participate on their own side. Precisely because a debate is a contest, what might otherwise be a dry political discussion became *important* as well as engrossing. It did not matter that a "winner" was not announced; probably most people in the audience continued the argument later that evening, no doubt coming up with better answers on specific points than those they had heard. To evaluate and to try to improve are, after all, appropriate and valuable responses to such a public and competitive process.

In November 1998, we presented a debate at the National Communication Association's annual convention in New York, in November, 1998. The topic, "Resolved that affirmative action in higher education should be discontinued," was argued by Congressman Danny Davis of Chicago and Professor Barbara Bergmann of American University, on the Left, and Dinesh D'Souza of the American Enterprise Institute, and Abigail Thernstrom of the Manhattan Institute, on the Right. Bergmann, Thernstrom, and D'Souza have all written books about affirmative action, and Davis himself has a doctorate. The audience, made up of college and university faculty, seemed to be more favorable to the pro-affirmative action side. Davis presented a powerful philosophical defense of affirmative action, and Bergmann cited chapter and verse about the continued need for such a policy. D'Souza argued the general principle of merit against affirmative action, and Thernstrom presented a passionate and highly effective attack on affirmative action.

Recalling the success of our first national debate evaluation in Columbus, on the morning following the affirmative action debate in New York we assembled a panel of debate analysts to present their examination of the performances of Davis, Bergmann, D'Souza, and Thernstrom. Once again, the debate evaluation was fascinating. In their summation, debate coaches documented the Right's successful defense of the proposal to eliminate affirmative action in higher education. For example, while illustrating Davis's rhetorical strengths, the analysts also pointed out that the Left overlooked some of its most effective arguments: the legacy of discrimination and its cumulative effect, and the importance of providing role models for African Americans. The evaluation pointed to the difference between being persuasive in a rhetorical sense and in actually being effective in argument.

Right versus Left: A Course

Three groups of adult students at Wayne State University's Interdisciplinary Studies Program have now taken a course that begins with a video of the first debate. Each time, the results of the follow-up discussion have been striking. Students displayed sophisticated judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of each side. The strongest student voices felt, as had Molyneux's student evaluators, that the Left did best in terms of laying out its general principles. In other words, they thought the best case was made for the Left's values of community, democracy, and equality—and support for the weakest among us. At the same time, they understood and accepted the Right's criticism of the Left on policy grounds. They thought that the Left had appealing values but failed to make concrete proposals. A small minority on each side wholly accepted "their" side's arguments; the rest sided with one side or the other with critical appreciation for the points made by their opponents.

This discussion kicked off a course that sought to promote, and provide practice in, interdisciplinary problem-solving. The students, promised increased political literacy, were asked to read texts in economics, political philosophy, history, and cognitive science—and then to study and debate a current political issue. The course, which might best be entitled "Left versus Right: Current American Political Debates," explores the cleavage that runs through virtually all political issues today. It includes readings from Rush Limbaugh and James Carville, economists Milton Friedman and Robert Kuttner, Godfrey Hodgeson's history of American conservativism, and Bobbio's and Lakoff's books.

In the most recent version of the course, students then debated and wrote a paper on family issues, affirmative action, or school vouchers, in which they followed up on a particular issue. The idea was to place the students within current debates and at the same time to explore these debates. Students were asked to see the coherence and logic of both sides *while taking sides*. The goal was to foster active participation, which in our view includes two things: taking sides *and* listening seriously to the other side.

Early in the course students were asked to debate a topic on the spot, which seemed to trouble them and was not a successful assignment. They were asked to take sides for or against Friedman or Kuttner, that is, for or against government intervention in the economy. They were ill-prepared to do so based on their first few readings and discussions. Then they read Lakoff's *Moral Politics*. This book on worldviews gave the students a new basis for thinking about politics.

Lakoff is concerned with how people describe as well as see their world, and claims to explain the consistency of what is otherwise contradictory within a Left and Right worldview. For example, why is it that on the Right people are quite willing to use the government to enforce morality while they reject government intervention in the economy? And on the Left, why do people see vigorous government action to equalize opportunity, but demand the room to act freely in other areas? Lakoff's "strict father" and "nurturant parent" models explain these within a semi-psychological rather than a historical or philosophical framework, and students feel that this has great explanatory power. Students said that they were finally able to see why someone saw the world as they did—as part of an entire system of experience and perception—rather than in terms of philosophical or social principles.

This did not relieve them of the necessity of arguing, but allowed them to ground their arguing more securely. After reading Lakoff's discussion of Left and Right worldviews, they were asked to interview each other in order to learn where their colleagues stood along the Left-Right spectrum. This assignment was the turning point of the course. From this point on, students situated themselves in the issues and the issues in themselves. They approached class assignments, and the task of arguing, with far greater comfort. They felt at ease with the instructor's probing about the premises behind each side in the debates. And they learned to ask about the underlying values that led them to agree with this or that position. From this point on, the course was able to connect the series of issues with the worldviews and political philosophies around which they cluster, and to do so both critically and with a sense of engagement.

Many students were not sure of their own position at the beginning of the class. But this is, after all, a program for working adults, whose average age is forty. Once they know that they will be respected, almost all of them are comfortable saying what they believe and are willing and ready to tell the rest of the group. They are not afraid of complexity or controversy. With adults one does not have to be delicate about asking for opinions; their maturity more often than not enables them to both see the other side and to ask and explain why they believe as they do without assuming that their position is the only possible one. At the beginning some worried a bit about how the professor viewed their opinions, but eventually almost every student realized that *this* was not a basis for judgment. Accordingly, in the interviews, Lefts and Rights appeared, and serious and intelligent discussion took place.

The one-on-one interviews were followed by papers in which each student described the worldview of the student he or she had interviewed, and explained why he or she disagreed with that worldview. No one was shy about criticizing his or her colleagues, but these disagreements had the tone of respect that made it clear that such worldviews were not simply the result of errors or stupidity. Once students knew that their own attitudes were deeply rooted in personal experience and values, it became harder to dismiss those of others.

By allowing this part of the course to focus on the *subjective* ground of people's values, students then felt more solid moving to the objective ground of policy options and political positions. And this is what happened during the remainder of the course. During the final weeks, each student entered into a debate over one of three issues: gay and lesbian marriage, affirmative action, and school vouchers. The full-scale debates were the climax of the course. By and large, the arguments took place at an extremely high level, students generally appreciated the arguments for the other side even as they presented their own, and considerable learning about the issues took place. Then, as a final assignment, students were asked to take a step back and present *both sides* of the debate, explaining the historical and other reasons for the emergence of the issue.

In oral and written evaluations, and in comments made directly to the instructor, most students talked about how much they had learned about politics, about current issues, and even about themselves. This was certainly helped by their experience of debating, as well as proceeding from the assumption that debating politics is a natural outcome of studying politics.

The Debate Strategy

Our experience with the debates and the classes convinces us of the need for continuing to produce Left/Right confrontations on major issues. It merits becoming a large-scale program of public citizenship education.

While we hope to involve ordinary citizens themselves in debating issues, and this goal governs the entire project, this is obviously helped along considerably by focusing energy on creating nationally televised debates featuring nationally visible figures. Such people command media attention, draw audiences, bring in volunteer support, capture the interest of university administrators, faculty and students, and have the potential to draw financial support from relevant foundations. Accordingly, we have envisioned producing one or two national debates a year—at venues where full-house audiences and the necessary financial backing are available—on the most pressing current issues. Our initial model was the *Nation/National Review* debates in New York, which allow for audience questions, guarantee a large crowd (because the networks supporting each magazine are strongest there), and draw nationally known speakers (for example, Jessie Jackson and Christopher Hitchens arguing against the death penalty in April, 1997).

Such a project would be justified simply by performing a useful public education function like the *Nation* and *National Review*: informing people about issues and, like C-SPAN (and hopefully with its help) making these debates available to a wider audience. Beyond this, however, what can make such a program especially valuable is not only producing several national debates, but the further development of these into a planned series, and, above all, taking the next, local, steps: producing local debates before smaller audiences, featuring locally known speakers, drawing local and regional media attention. Programs could be developed around specific issues, for example, school vouchers, where there are strong local networks and current arguments on each side of the question. These debates may be seen by activist groups as ways of organizing support, as well they should.

Organizations—even opposing organizations—could be induced to collaborate in developing materials stating key positions on all sides. With appropriate financial and organizational support these materials could be made available at the local debates. Building on the national debates, the purpose of large local debates would be both to present the clash of issues and to draw attention to continuing the process at a more grass-roots level, which in turn would bring debates before local community organizations, trade-union groups, and schools. This requires considerable preparation, as well as training sessions for debaters pro and con. A variety of community activists might be interested in such issues training, and printed materials could be used for developing arguments on each side. Media-oriented local debates might then become organizing venues for more grass-roots projects. Such projects would build on cooperation between the contending sides to recruit would-be debaters, organize training sessions, distribute materials, and develop a timetable for additional debates. Follow-up evaluation sessions could be paralleled with each additional session.

Networks of organizations interested in presenting such debates before their membership do not have to be created—they already exist on the community level. At local debates they can be acquainted with local organizations offering them speakers, planning coordination, and sources of educational materials. At this grass-roots level, it will be possible to make use of national debate videos in which several prominent figures have debated the issue, say, in Washington, D.C. or at a national NEA or AFT or NAACP convention. The videotaped debate is a useful, even important, tool of citizenship education, especially when used actively, so that those watching it are either clarifying their own ideas or studying the debate in order to sharpen their own arguments on the issue. Beyond this, and building on it, we can even envision a national cable channel devoted to presenting meaningful political debate.

How, short of such a concerted national program, can such ideas be used in the classroom? How might they be brought to bear on small-scale adult education projects? How can an individual instructor committed to adult political literacy develop such ideas in a few class sessions? Our sense is that such debates could be organized anywhere learning is taking place, and that educators need only find ways of building on the students' preexisting involvement with one or another issue. One model is using adult learners themselves, rather than outside experts, as the sources of the arguments. A second would be to stage debates between two or four people in which the rest of the students are active participants by way of asking questions and then, afterward, evaluating the debate. Another would be to use a videotape of such a debate, and make the evaluation into a class project. In each case, two points should be observed: first, evaluation should not only be done by the students themselves, but they themselves should develop the criteria for evaluation; and second, it is important to not have the students pretend to neutrality or remain outside the issues in order to be "objective," but to enter into the discussions in a partisan way, in order to then reflect on their own convictions and the underlying values that lead to them.

The Need for Articulating One's Own Values

Fundamental to democratic values are the ideals of political literacy and the goal of citizenship education. As John Rachal (1989) observed, for the betterment of the global community, adult education must assume a proactive role. "Adult education," argues Rachal, "can be a powerful force in the marketplace of values to ensure that the narrowest interests do not prevail" (p. 13). By making political literacy a priority, adult learners can begin to clarify just what is involved in serious, meaningful, and civil political discourse—in order to develop a critical awareness of techniques and approaches, as well as to articulate the relationship of values and interests to political argument. By stressing the values of good citizenship, a scholarly understanding of the conditions for, and nature of, meaningful public discourse, civility, and adult political education, we intend to continue to develop political debates on significant national policies and values issues.

As we all know, in arguing there are two levels on which we engage with the other side: What are the facts and what are the underlying premises? In this article we are advocating going back to the starting points, figuring out what they are and mean and how to say them loudly and clearly. This will demand self-knowledge. It will take thinking about the relationship of ideas, ideology, and worldviews to political action. It will take a willingness to participate—to listen, to talk to, and to learn from all sides of the political world. To develop an active and critical consciousness, adult learners must be encouraged by way of example to willingly participate in political dialogue, debate, and evaluation. By effectively engaging in and not avoiding argument, they can begin to clarify their own values assumptions, discovering their own voice in the process.

Few readers of this article will need convincing that the goals of adult education, so obviously oriented to strengthening individuals, are also fundamentally political. If our concerns for educating adults lead us to think critically about the social conditions that foster illiteracy, including marginalization, powerlessness, exploitation, and oppression, we will naturally connect the personal side—assisting people in overcoming how these conditions affect them as individuals—with collective efforts to challenge the conditions more globally. As in other areas of literacy education, understanding should become action, learning should become participation. It is important but not enough to know about the forces shaping our society's character and the decisions creating its future. Without a further step, literacy too often becomes cynical passivity. That further step involves participating actively in the process of shaping our collective world.

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A Delicate Balancing Act:
Adult Education in South Africa

James B. Stewart

Introduction

This analysis examines the actual and potential role of adult basic education (ABE) in advancing the transformation of South Africa. Although there were expectations that the transition in government would lead to major investments in ABE in support of development and nation-building efforts, such investments have not been forthcoming. Facing major economic and political constraints, the current African National Congress (ANC)-led government has provided only limited financial support for ABE and appears to have downgraded expectations regarding the role of ABE in the transformation process. It appears that the principal role now intended for ABE is to facilitate the upgrading of workers' skills. The present investigation attempts to identify strategies that can be used to enhance the contribution of adult education programs to the broader processes of nation-building and social transformation, while maintaining a focus on improvements in the quality of the labor force.

The analysis begins with a brief discussion of the transformation process and the structural constraints facing the current government. The history of adult education in South Africa prior to the political transformation is then presented. The evolution of the government's current approach to adult education is interpreted by adapting a model developed by Paulston and Altenbaugh (1988). The implementation process is then examined and critiqued. The concluding section offers recommendations for achieving greater coherence between social transformation and economic objectives in ABE using selected programs in European countries and the European Union as a point of reference.

The Transformation Process and the Legacy of Apartheid

Observers across the world were riveted when the long-deferred dreams of a wholesale political transformation in the Republic of South Africa actually began to materialize before their eyes. The struggle against apartheid had been bloody and protracted, involving interest groups and governments around the globe. The selection of F.W. De-

Klerk as leader of the National Party in February 1989 and his subsequent election as state President in September 1989, replacing hardliner P.W. Botha, foreshadowed one of the most remarkable political events of the 20th century.

Secret meetings involving government representatives and ANC representatives had been held dating back to 1985, and continued in 1986 and 1987. But for many external spectators, the possibility that real change was imminent did not sink in until ANC stalwart Walter Sisulu and a number of other ANC leaders were released from prison in October 1989. Even the most recalcitrant skeptics were forced to acknowledge the growing velocity of the winds of change when Nelson Mandela, now former President, was released in February 1990.

Formal multi-party talks to outline the configuration of a new social order began in December 1991 under the rubric of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa). This positive momentum for change was stalled, however, when the second Codesa collapsed in May 1992. In the wake of escalating political violence, a "Record of Understanding" was concluded between the ANC and the existing government, designed to keep the transformation process on course. Finally, an election date was set in July 1993 and an agreement on an interim constitution was concluded that November. A Transitional Executive Council, along with a multi-party interim government, assumed the reins of power in December 1993 (for a chronology of events leading up to the transition in power see Waldmeir, 1997).

When the first democratic national election was held in April 1994, the ANC scored a major victory, completing the cycle of events that marked its transformation from an organization outlawed under apartheid to the political party charged with sculpting the contours of a new South Africa. Under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, a government of national unity was established in May 1994 and a new Constitution was adopted in May 1996.

Since assuming the reins of leadership, the ANC government has struggled valiantly to overcome a complex set of constraints that hamper realization of the vision set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution, which states in part:

> We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to—
>
> Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
>
> Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
>
> Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
>
> Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

Many of the challenges facing South African policymakers in improving the quality of life for citizens and building a united and democratic South Africa stem directly from the legacy of massive discrimination in educational expenditures during the apartheid regime. To illustrate, May (1998) reports that in 1994 there remained a wide variation in per capita expenditure on education, ranging from R5,403 for white schools to R1,053 for schools located in the Transkei, one of the former homelands. One of the cumulative effects of decades of inequitable distribution of educational resources is a massive number of adults who lack the basic skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to the transformation of South Africa.

In the early 1990s, South Africa's 60% adult literacy rate ranked it between less-developed and all developing countries despite expenditures of about 7.3% of Gross Domestic Product on education and training (Ghost of apartheid past, 1993). The pupil-teacher ratio for whites was 22:1, while that for blacks was 45:1. These disparities were even greater during the apartheid era, with the result that 5.3 million people 20 or older are functionally illiterate. This constitutes 31% of the total population and 41% of all blacks 20 or older.

Although the ANC established a proposed goal of reaching three million new ABE learners during the period 1995-2000, the likelihood of reaching such a goal is remote (ANC, 1994). The current South African government has had hard choices to make with respect to the allocation of scarce resources among various competing needs, of which investments in human resources is only one. Attainment of the ABE delivery goal would require training an additional 100,000 tutors, but only R5 million was allocated per province to support ABE initiatives for 1996 (Harley, Aitchison, Lyster, & Land, 1996).

Approximately one quarter of the government budget is allocated to education, while state-level support for training is provided principally through the Department of Labour. The funds provided by the national government are insufficient; as a consequence, the principal responsibility for initiatives to reduce poverty and inequality lies with provincial governments.

Within the arena of education, per se, the provinces also assume the lion's share of responsibility. Approximately 85% of the Education budget and the bulk of the staff are funded at the provincial level (May, 1998). Choices among different educational programs are as difficult as those between poverty-reducing programs and other public policy initiatives. Four of the areas of education that have special significance for the poor are early childhood development (ECD), primary and secondary public schooling, adult basic education and training (ABET), and vocational training for disadvantaged adults.

ABE and training programs currently still reach only 6% of the estimated 5.3 million adults lacking formal schooling and literacy skills. Approximately 80% of provincial educational budgets are allocated to public schools, with two thirds of this directed to the primary level (May, 1998). This concentration of resources leaves little opportunity for expansion in areas such as ABE.

The constraints facing the government with respect to establishing and implementing a mass ABE program stem not only from difficult economic conditions, but also from policy choices made by the previous regime.

Adult Education in South Africa—Historical Background

The first documented adult education initiatives targeted at blacks were established in the Witwatersrand region during the 1920s (Bird, 1985). Until the late 1970s, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were the major actors providing ABE, but only on a relatively small scale (Harley, et al., 1996). During the 1970s and 1980s the political ideology undergirding many of these NGOs was anti-government, although "some of the larger, older NGOs remained politically conservative, working more closely with the government than the democratic movement" (p. 154).

The Bureau of Literacy and Literature, which began operations in 1946 under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations, was the first South African literacy organization. By the 1980s it was serving approximately 40,000 clients, providing materials produced in 15 South African languages (Harley et al., 1996).

Operation Upgrade was established in 1966 as an affiliate of the U.S.-based Laubach Organization, although official ties to the U.S. were severed in 1971 (Harley et al., 1996). Project Literacy established a series of Adult Education Centers beginning in 1973. Its initial focus was the provision of literacy training to domestic servants working in what were designated then as residential areas restricted for whites.

Learn and Teach was one of the earliest politically progressive NGOs to initiate ABE activities. In 1972, operating under the auspices of the Catholic Church, Learn and Teach adopted the approach advocated by Paulo Freire. One of its major contributions was the establishment of *Learn and Teach* magazine, published between 1979 and 1994. The magazine, which became a widely used source of ABE materials, separated from the parent organization during the mid-1980s (Harley et al., 1996).

Growing involvement of progressive NGOs in the adult education arena in the 1980s led to efforts in 1986 to coordinate activities under the auspices of the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC) (Harley et al., 1996). Religious organizations were also increasingly active in providing adult education during the 1970s. The Centres of Concern movement started in churches located in metropolitan areas of South Africa in the

1970s, initially as an attempt to provide a support base for domestic workers, using volunteers from local congregations (Van Heerden, 1991).

The South African government did not show any significant interest in ABE until after World War II. In 1945 a Commission of Inquiry was set up to examine needs in the area of adult education. This commission established a plan designed to foster locally operated night schools (French, 1988). Although enabling legislation was passed, the National Party came into power before it could be widely implemented. While the legislation was not rescinded, benign neglect led to progressive attrition. French observes that, "the sheer burden of legislation directed at residential segregation, general control over education for blacks, and state security, made it discouraging, if not impossible, to conduct adult education" (p. 27).

A variety of economic and political developments forced the National Party to begin provision of ABE during the late 1970s, and specifically the establishment of a night school system in 1977 (Morphet, Millar, & Prinsloo, 1992). Initially, the primary objective of the night schools was the upgrading of teacher qualifications. The night schools operated almost exclusively in buildings used for formal education during the day. Teachers employed as instructors of traditional school-age children during the regular school day served as part-time instructors in the adult education night schools. This delivery model allowed a large number of clients to be served, had well-articulated patterns of progression, and provided completing students with nationally recognized certification. However, it has been strongly criticized by professional adult educators (Harley et al., 1996). The Department of Education (1995) indicates:

> From the beginning the system was criticised by adult educationists. It followed a schooling curriculum in the Christian National Education mould with a few features adjusted for adults, used teachers with little or no retraining for adult education, had very few staff members dedicated solely to its operation, always played second fiddle to the interests of the day schools in which it was located…In

> short, it lacked legitimacy and adult education professionalism. (p. 2)

Business firms, and in particular the large mining operations, also became involved in the provision of literacy programs during the 1970s. Many of the early training programs were registered with the Department of Education and Training as private or state-aided education centers (Harley et al., 1996). During the early 1980s more firms began programs, often prompted by efforts to comply with external codes of conduct established by foreign investors as part of the anti-apartheid movement. However, the wave of disinvestment in the mid-1980s, coupled with pressures to cut costs in the face of persisting recessionary conditions, contributed to a significant reduction in company-sponsored programs by the end of the decade (Van Heerden, 1991).

Colleges and universities also began to devote more resources to ABE in the 1980s. The University of Cape Town was the first university to establish formal ABE programs in 1983. Other traditionally white universities also set up units devoted to adult education during the 1980s, most including an ABE component, while historically black universities were relatively recent entrants into the ABE arena (Harley et al., 1996). The Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, established at the University of the Western Cape in 1985, is one exception to this pattern. The Centre's explicit goal was to contribute actively to the struggle for democracy. Its resource materials and teacher education curriculum reflect a more radical and progressive perspective than is the case for most of the other universities.

French (1988) hypothesized that the establishment of adult education departments in large universities could provide an impetus for greater attention to ABE in the 1990s. French was correct—ABE scholars played an important role in the debate about ABE during the early 1990s as illustrated in the discussion below of the development of the new government's policies on ABE.

Forging a New Model of Adult Basic Education

Anticipation of changes in the political environment in South Africa ushered in a wave of activity in the area of ABE in the early 1990s. Harley et al. (1996) observe:

> Prior to 1990, ABE policy was practically non-existent. The sudden energy around formulating policy, which started in the early 1990s, has largely been the result of the political changes which have taken place in the country over the last five years. The prospect of a new democratic government created a climate in which the development of policy by its supporters was a burning issue. The main assumption underlying much of the ABE policy work at this stage was that this new government would take ABE far more seriously and would be far more involved in ABE provision. (p. 149)

The terms of the debate were understandably shaped by the apartheid experience. Government- and business-sponsored programs suffered from a lack of credibility in the wake of the protracted and contentious struggle against apartheid. French (1988) noted that a serious credibility problem existed because "South African literacy projects…have all—left, centre, official, private—been initiated and structured by whites [, a]nd many of their ideas and practices are shaped abroad" (p. 30).

The emergent model emphasized articulation with the primary and secondary school systems. The interim guidelines issued by the Department of Education in 1995 reinforced the formal certification dimension of ABE (Harley et al., 1996). The model of adult basic education has been expanded to include training, leading to contemporary use of the term Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in policy documents. This extension reflects specific interests of important players including the African National Congress, the Centre for Education Policy Development, the national Department of Education, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). However, Harley et al. observe that there are few signs that the training component has actually been operationalized. Despite the limited focus on training, the term ABET is employed in the remainder of this analysis, reflecting its usage in official policy documents.

Wydeman and Kamper (1990) note that "illiteracy in South Africa is assuming such enormous proportions that no group, organization or sector will be able to overcome the problem on its own" (p.43). They observe further that progress requires active involvement of all structured social forces and activities in a country and can be effectively addressed only if a national spirit of cooperation is cultivated.

The active involvement of various social forces, including the still ruling National Party government, was evident in the exploration of ABET models and implementation strategies during the early 1990s. In addition to the ANC, bodies involved in the dialogue about ABET included the Centre for Education Policy Development, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) [an initiative of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)], the National Party government, the National Training Board (NTB), the South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (SACABE), and, following the 1994 elections, the new South African government. The content of the various proposals and implementation developed during the early 1990s are summarized in Table 1.

The evolution of the various policy proposals should be understood as a process in which different conceptions of ABE and different political agendas were in contention. The framework developed by Paulston and Altenbaugh (1988) to examine the sociology of adult education programs provides a useful means to interpret this process.

Paulston and Altenbaugh (1988) present a typology of five generic types of adult education programs categorized on the basis of "'central tendencies' vis a vis their orientation to change and control" (p. 117). These five program types are Conventional, Consumer, Radical Humanist, Radical Structuralist, and Reformist. Conventional programs do not embody change of either individuals or systems as a major objective. Instead, they function largely to maintain the status quo by enhancing "individual and social efficiency and productivity" (p. 118). This category includes most traditional adult education programs offered through formal educational systems in business, the military, government, etc.

Table 1. Summary of ABET Proposals Submitted by Various Bodies

Author	Release Date*	Summary
National Party Government – Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)	1992	ABET as vocational education deliverable via distance education modalities possibly linked to formal education a national qualification structure
NEPI	1992	Offers 3 policy options for organizing ABET: (A) a component of a comprehensive national development policy; (B) central coordination by a non-governmental body; (C) modification of then existing system with the state serving in a coordinating role
COSATU	1994	Integration of training and skills to equip workers with critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a national system of standards and certificates; delivery through an outcomes-based curriculum model focusing on core competencies; ABET is the first phase of a process of life-long learning
NTB	1994	ABET as a vehicle to equip learners for full societal participation; delivery through a competency-based curriculum model with 10 core competencies specified
ANC	1995	ABET as a foundation for life-long learning; delivery through a modular national outcomes-based curriculum model designed to teach the skills necessary to participate fully in society

Table 1. **Summary of ABET Proposals Submitted by Various Bodies** (continued)

Author	**Release Date***	**Summary**
SACABE	1993	ABET as a foundation for life-long learning designed to prepare individuals to participate in a democratic society; ABET should be linked to development initiatives should be a component of poverty reduction and redistribution policies
CEPD – Implementation Plan	1994	ABET delivery through a national curriculum stressing generic competencies/outcomes with an integrated qualifications framework providing quality assurance
Government of National Unity – White Paper on Education and Training	1995	ABET as a force for social participation and development, providing an essential component of all RDP programs; ABET should be linked with the formal education system through a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that integrated ABET into the total system of recognized, certifiable levels
Department of Education – Interim Guidelines	1995	ABET as a means of national reconstruction and development; delivery through a modular competency-based curriculum model using 10 competencies proposed by the NTB

*Date indicates the timing of the release of final reports, dating of interim reports not included

Source: Compiled from information in Harley et al. (1996). *A survey of adult basic education in South Africa in the 90s.* Johannesburg: Sached Books, Chapter 3.

Consumer programs focus almost exclusively on individual growth and self-realization. Like traditional programs, there is little orientation toward change but, unlike traditional programs, control rests with individuals or small groups (Paulston & Altenbaugh, 1988). Radical programs emphasize participant control and social change. "Here groups opposing the status quo and seeking radical change use adult education as anti-structure, as another weapon in their struggle for what they see as social justice" (p. 118). Notably, Paulston and Altenbaugh use the ANC as an example of a group advocating this type of adult education. French (1988) suggested that during the battle against apartheid the ANC made the "running of a national literacy campaign into an explicit commitment of its educational and cultural policy" (p. 30).

Radical Structuralist adult education is described by the authors as "transformational" adult education involving situations where "revolutionary movements have actually taken control and are using state power to transform social, economic and educational systems so as to achieve the ideological goals of the revolution" (Paulston & Altenbaugh, 1988, p. 118). Finally, reformist adult education is offered as a hybrid form, where "collective change efforts largely outside of formal systems control use [of] adult education in incremental change efforts seeking greater equity via civil rights movements, labour movements, peace and environmental movements" (p. 118).

ABET models can also be categorized on the basis of delivery modalities. Bhola (1995) delineates three forms of delivery: projects, programs, and campaigns. Projects are typically small-scale operations outside the purview of government. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis with the expectation that literacy will improve employment outcomes. This type of delivery mode should be most frequently correlated with the traditional and consumer forms of adult education, as described by Paulston and Altenbaugh (1988).

Program delivery strategies are designed to serve large audiences with varying degrees of government involvement. Government may be involved in direct provision and/or form partnerships with nongovernmental bodies to expand the scope of delivery. This delivery mode is designed to support a process of slow reform or limited change over an extended period of time as reflected in the voluntary character of participation. Both traditional and reformist approaches can be implemented through programs.

Campaigns are designed to facilitate rapid structural societal change. Revolutionary movements may employ small-scale literacy campaigns to rally support for liberation struggles. In turn, once power has been assumed, revolutionary regimes often employ large-scale literacy campaigns as part on an effort to create a sense of collective identity and to create a broad-based commitment to nation-building. This form of delivery is compatible with both the radical and radical structuralist approaches, although the scale and operational characteristics may differ.

The relationship among adult education typologies and delivery modes is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of Adult Education and Typical Delivery Modes

	DELIVERY MODE		
ABE Approach	**Project**	**Program**	**Campaign**
Conventional	X	X	
Consumer	X	X	
Radical Humanist			X
Radical Structuralist			X
Reformist	X	X	

Source: ABE Approaches are taken from Paulston, R., & Altenbaugh, R. (1988). Adult education in radical US social and ethnic movements: From case studies to typology to explanation. In T. Lovett (Ed.), *Radical approaches to adult education: A reader*. New York: Routledge, 114-137.

The categorization of delivery modes is based on Bhola (1995).

Language policy is an especially critical parameter of nation-building in cases where a number of indigenous languages exist. Anderson (1991) observes that while in many emergent or mature nations the national print language is common to large segments of the population, "in others only a tiny fraction of the population 'uses' the national language in conversation or on paper" (p. 46). Language policy is especially important in South Africa where eleven official languages are recognized and both English and Afrikaans are used as "commercial" languages.

The Paulston/Altenbaugh typology is a useful framework for interpreting the development of the new ABET model in South Africa. Under the former regime a traditional ABE model was introduced using a program delivery format operating in night schools. As noted previously, in its role as a revolutionary opposition movement, the ANC was inclined toward a campaign approach. To illustrate, Mandela (1991) asserts that "the renewal of organized, mass opposition and resistance to the institutions of racial domination" was "the central feature of South African politics during the 1980s" (p. 137). In discussing the process of transforming South Africa under an ANC-led regime, Mandela (1993), insisted that "it is important that the mass antiapartheid movement...should also look for ways and means by which it could assist with regard to the developmental issues that face us" (p. 285).

The Nationalist government was forced to institute a number of reforms in response to the pressure applied by the mass movement. Its proposals to alter the existing ABE model were simply a tardy effort to retain its status as a major player in deliberations about the future structure of critical social institutions. The proposals did, however, mark a significant departure from the previous approach in both content and delivery modality.

As it became clear that the Nationalist regime would be forced to yield the power of governance to the ANC, the various parties began developing proposals for a new ABET model. This design process, however, had no mandate per se, because there was, de facto, no regime in a position in the early 1990s to implement a new ABET model. Thus, the type of structural integrity and governance structure implied by the Paulson/Altenbaugh typology was missing.

The delicate nature of the political negotiations and the significant compromises that were necessary to bring about the political transition left the new ANC government with little room to operate as a truly revolutionary regime in the sense used by Paulson and Altenbaugh (1988). As a consequence, a large-scale campaign approach to ABET was not immediately feasible although, as noted by French (1988), the platform of the ANC and its allies seemed to imply that a national literthe ANC and its allies seemed to imply that a national literacy campaign would be a logical expression of its educational and cultural policy. The political constraints necessitated a more incrementalist approach and, as noted previously, the economic conditions at the time of the ANC's assumption of the governmental reins precluded a large-scale investment in education in general, and ABET in particular. All of these factors augured for a reformist approach that incorporated elements of the old system while introducing new approaches championed by the most important constituencies.

At the same time, there were still echoes of a more radical approach echoing in policy-making circles. To illustrate, Harley et al. (1996) note that the Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper, released in 1994, treated ABET "as a National Literacy Campaign rather than a sustained and permanent line function of a state ministry" (p. 220). Smaller-scale campaign approaches have, in fact, been implemented. As an example, the "Ithuteng—Ready to Learn Campaign" was launched in February 1996 as the starting point for a larger-scale campaign against illiteracy. The Department of Education committed to providing R50 million for the campaign, supplemented by R1.4 million from the European Union. However, the scale of the project is limited, with a goal of providing literacy and ABET to 10,000 learners in each province over a period of two years (Mokgalane & Vally, 1996).

Despite such vestiges of a more radical approach, the momentum clearly pushed deliberations in the direction of a reformist model, as defined by Paulston and Altenbaugh (1988). The ANC was, of course, an active player in the debate about ABE and, given the credibility issues mentioned previously, its position gravitated toward the perspectives of its allies during the freedom struggle.

The ANC's plans were heavily influenced by its alliance with COSATU. Characterizing the role of COSATU in the Paulson/Altenbaugh typology is difficult because it is not only a labor union federation, but also an actual partner in the coalition government. During the anti-apartheid struggle, COSATU played an important political role. It mounted an aggressive educational campaign targeted at its members that combined elements of workers' education, political consciousness raising, and mobilization discourse in opposition to the apartheid regime.

However, in its current role COSATU is no longer in a position to operate as part of a revolutionary opposition movement. Neither government nor the business sector can be approached as political enemies as was the case during the apartheid regime.

Thus, in its formal role as a trade union federation, COSATU has been primarily concerned with promoting ABET for workers employed in the industrial sector. One of its principal objectives is to increase workers' productivity, wages, and mobility by increasing learning opportunities linked to industrial restructuring. COSATU has used both project and program approaches to pursue this objective. As an example, one of COSATU's affiliates, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), signed an education agreement with the Chamber of Mines in 1996 that will allow miners paid time off to attend ABET courses at the mines. The training will be coordinated by the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) (Mokgalane & Vally, 1996).

In its role as a member of the ruling coalition, COSATU has been in a position to have significant influence on the model of ABET implemented in all sectors. Australia has served as the model upon which COSATU built its proposal and focuses on "situat[ing] the recognition of work experience within the framework of competencies which could be assessed without the need for further training" (Harley et al., 1996, p. 120).

Although the reformist ABET model emerging from the deliberations incorporates perspectives from a variety of sources, the influence of COSATU is especially notable. The design incorporates COSATU's interest in a competence-based approach delivered through a "modular" curriculum of the type increasingly found in the industrial sector. The Green Paper on Skills Development Strategy (1997) endorses the idea of "applied competence" as a generic term that embodies three types of competence: practical competence, i.e., the ability to perform a set of tasks; foundational competence, i.e., understanding of own and others' behavior and motivations; and reflexive competence, i.e., demonstrated ability to connect performances with understanding of those performances to enable learning and adaptation to be made in the face of changing circumstances (Department of Labour, 1997).

ABET is now integrated into the total system of recognized, certifiable levels of achievement, and the specific competencies targeted for enhancement through ABET are congruent with the standards set forth in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Ten core competencies, originally proposed by the NTB, have been specified as the focus of instruction (Harley et al., 1996; p. 164). These competencies are:

a. Thinking about and using learning processes and strategies
b. Solving problems and making decisions
c. Planning, organising and evaluating activities
d. Working with others as a member of a team/group/organisation/community
e. Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information
f. Communicating ideas and information
g. Participating in civil society and democratic processes through understanding and engaging with a range of interlocking systems (legal, economic, political, social)
h. Using science and technology critically to enhance control over the environment in a range of fields and contexts
i. Applying mathematical ideas and techniques
j. Understanding and using the core skills, concepts and procedures that underlie the domains of social and human sciences, natural sciences, arts, languages and literature (p. 164).

A variety of criticisms have been leveled at the new model, including:

a) preference to the urban black working class over rural residents and the unemployed;
b) excessive centralization, requiring the coordination of several components and administrative reorganization;
c) excessive resource-intensivity and high cost of competence-based models;
d) inappropriate reliance on high levels of cooperation between employers' representatives and workers' organizations;

e) potential for narrow definition of competencies to accommodate employers' interests; and
f) lack of commitment of resources to implementing the model. (Harley et al., 1996).

Despite these criticisms, the implementation process is well underway as described below.

Implementation

A National Task Team was appointed by the Minister of Education in 1994 charged, in part, with "building a strong ABET division within the education department, securing funding for ABET, and liaising between stakeholders, the provinces and government" (Harley et al., 1996; p. 190). The National ABET Task Team organized a conference in 1995 designed to provide a national framework that would enable provinces to implement programs effectively, to develop a coherent national program that reflected coordination of activities of provinces and various ministries, and clarify the role of the National Task Team.

Participants at a national workshop convened in March 1995 to develop interim guidelines and standards agreed that a common national accreditation system should be developed based on units, credits, and levels. Recommendations were developed regarding the respective roles of the national and provincial government in matters including curriculum development and modification, staff development, and funding (Harley et al., 1996). Provincial task teams had been established previously and had prepared draft reports recommending administrative and delivery models.

The National Task Team was reconstituted as the National Stakeholders Forum (NSF), reestablishing opportunities for various sectors to be represented. However, Harley et al. (1996) observed that the university community, which had been vital in the development of ABE policy, remained unrepresented until October 1995. National interim guidelines for ABET were issued in September 1995, and a National ABET Council was appointed. An inter-ministerial working group has recommended that the Department of Education take over the training functions of the

Department of Labour, but Labour is still undertaking most of the coordination of adult education (May, 1998).

Although movement has been evident in the establishment of administrative structures, the overall pace of implementation has been disappointing and many critical questions remain unanswered. While ABET is identified as an important component of the RDF, it has received any funding through this channel (Harley et al., 1996). Overall, anticipated increase in state financial support through other budgets has not been forthcoming, and in some instances provincial ABE budgets have actually decreased. Other forms of government support have also dwindled. As an example, companies no longer receive tax rebates if their literacy programs are part of a training package.

Most of the effort to date focused on integrating education and training, and promoting lifelong learning has focused on traditional schools rather than ABET providers. Both national and provincial activities have been hampered by lack of personnel, authority, and resources. Most provinces continue to employ traditional day-school teachers who then teach adults at night, using school methods and materials (May, 1998). These constraints are counterpoised to rising expectations regarding the capabilities of teachers. In particular, the new forms of assessment associated with the competencies approach requires a high level of skill on the part of teachers. Preparing learners to write the kinds of exams currently being piloted requires additional skills not possessed by most teachers, who will be required to alter their pedagogies significantly (Harley et al., 1996). At the same time, most initial teacher training for ABET is still done through short courses provided by commercial vendors. Harley et al. argue that these teacher training courses typically prepare teachers to deliver a particular course using a fixed set of materials and do not cultivate the flexibility and creativity required to implement the new ABET model effectively.

The assessment guidelines for ABET issued by the Department of Education (1998) indicate that unit standards will cover three categories, i.e., fundamental, core/conceptual, and elective. These categories are to be organized into "integrated learning programmes." The guidelines also stipulate that the assessment policy is to be applied "in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's ABET policy and draft ABET guidelines" (p. 8).

The major concern voiced by adult educators about the new ABET model is the appropriateness of transferring the Australian model into the South African landscape. South Africa has a much lower level of basic skills and much higher levels of formal sector unemployment. As a result, there is a much more pressing need to respond to the social circumstances of learners as part of the design and delivery processes. Consequently, there is a contradiction between the needs of the majority of illiterate citizens and the dictates of rapid macroeconomic skills development imposed by development objectives. Excessive focus on skill development, per se, runs the risk of further marginalizing those segments of the population, for example, rural residents, who are disconnected from the industrial sector (Harley et al., 1996).

In fact, company ABET programs now reach more learners than the government night school system (139,779 learners, as opposed to about 95,000) (Harley et al., 1996). Unions have played a key role in the revival of company ABE programs, with worker education becoming a major bargaining condition in many companies as illustrated by the new agreement between the NUM and the Chamber of Mines, discussed previously. Most company programs are well-financed, and unlikely to experience the type of financial crises experienced by other providers. At the same time, the failure of many company programs leads to the assessment that successful company programs will require a viable partnership between labor and management. This is one of the differences between the Australian and South African settings. In Australia there is currently more of an ethos of cooperation between unions and management than in South Africa.

The major union federations, i.e., COSATU, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), and the Federation of South African Labour Unions (FEDSAL), are in fact gearing up to play an even more active, independent role in ABET provision. They are collaborating to establish a labour institute called DITSELA (Development Institute of Training, Support and Education for Labour) charged with developing programs to provide learning pathways that will enable workers to obtain nationally recognized certificates within the National Qualifications Framework

(NQF). This is to be accomplished by integrating the activities of providers to build the delivery capability of trade unions. DITSELA's mission statement reiterates some of the broader objectives of the transformation process, e.g., promotion of equity, empowerment of workers within the society, and the extension of democracy in the workplace (Mokgalane & Vally, 1996).

Given the directions described above, it is important to examine the range of options available to refine the balancing act between the role of ABET as a skills development vehicle in support of macroeconomic objectives, and its role as a nation-building mechanism. The experiences of various European countries and the European Union (EU) provide a useful basis for comparison.

Additional Possibilities: ABET and the Future of South Africa

As suggested by Harley et al. (1996), there is no question that "nation building exists in increasing tension with strategies relating to the changing imperatives of formal sector production" (p. 81). The extent to which a true "social partnership" exists among labor, management, and government is critical to achieving a viable balance between the two objectives. Most European countries have been successful in cultivating viable partnerships after having proceeded through periods of highly adversarial labor-management relations at a much earlier point in time than South Africa. In addition, western European countries (with the exception of reunited Germany) do not face the type of contemporary nation-building problems that are being experienced in South Africa. As a consequence, it is much easier and appropriate to adopt a reformist model of ABET.

At the same time, it is important to note that despite conditions more favorable to supporting an intensive focus on skills development in support of macroeconomic growth objectives in most western European countries, a highly coordinated and centralized approach is a relatively recent development. As an example, in Italy it was not until 1989 that an agreement was reached to introduce an experimental program in a few regions whereby trade unions and employers' associations would develop joint committees to promote vocational training with instruction and financing provided by both parties (Regalia & Regini, 1995). In a number of Italian firms, successful initiatives to adapt to the dictates of international competition resulted in part from extensive labor flexibility and the cooperation of workplace representatives.

In Germany during the late 1980s, company programs for training subsequent to employment emerged as an important collective bargaining issue for unions, and has become increasingly important over time. To illustrate, a 1988 bargaining agreement for metal workers stipulated that management had to advise work councils of skill requirements and implementation of training programs. Notably, the agreement did not require co-determination of these issues, only notification (Baethge & Wolf, 1995), illustrating how continuing differences between labor and management can exist even when both parties recognize the importance of enhanced skills development.

The difficulties associated with reconciling the training expectations of government, businesses, and labor are further exemplified by the case of Sweden, which is often lauded for its array of government programs for training and education subsequent to employment. Efforts to coordinate government-sponsored training programs with employee training provided by firms are, as in the cases previously discussed, of only recent vintage. One of the continuing problems is that the amount and distribution of training provided by employers has been assessed as being far short of needs (Martin, 1995).

The major implication of the preceding discussion is that implementation of the training dimension of the new ABET model in South Africa will be difficult. It will require ongoing refinement, adaptation, and negotiation of competing interests. South African authorities would do well to explore models other than the Australian one to guide such refinement efforts. In addition, over-reliance on the business sector to provide training is not likely to produce the level of delivery necessary to meet societal objectives. In addition, training provided by the business sector cannot be expected to have either an orientation or content that promotes nation-building, and will typically not reach groups unconnected to formal labor markets.

Useful insights regarding the difficulties of linking ABET to macroeconomic development initiatives can be gleaned by examining selected challenges facing the European Union (EU). The EU was officially established by treaty in 1992, with implementation beginning November 1, 1993. The latest refinement of the organizational protocols and policy directions are set forth in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). One objective articulated in the treaty is the development of a more coherent EU strategy to boost employment. Strategies to accomplish this objective are presented in the Green Paper, "Partnership for a New Organisation of Work" (European Commission, 1997). The need for a more aggressive approach to education and training is repeatedly emphasized, as is the need to strengthen institutions that promote lifelong learning for all citizens. Special attention is focused on populations that are either not employed or traditionally marginalized. The Green Paper notes that only about 7% of the unemployed in member countries are offered training to equip them to re-enter the labor market. Aggressive efforts to promote equal opportunities for women and men in process of implementing and monitoring all EU policies is underscored.

The Green Paper calls for a shift from a teaching orientation to a learning focus to be accomplished, in part, by providing new types of initial training and continuing professional development for teachers and trainers. In addition, new forms of partnership between business, other organizations, and educators are seen as necessary to ensure that new and changing skills required for economic vitality are available.

Many of these points are reiterated in the report entitled, "Managing Change" (European Commission, High Level Group on Economic and Social Implications of Industrial Change, 1998). This report argues that companies should introduce training programs that prepare workers for (1) different approaches to their work as a result of technological, organisational or economic change; (2) changing jobs and acquiring new skills within the same company; and (3) adapting to the needs of the labour market, should they be forced to leave the company. Such programs are designed to focus beyond the immediate need of the job in question and prepare the worker for future requirements. The usefulness of such training requires a high degree of flexibility in the organization of work such that employees can make effective use of enhanced knowledge and skills. The report recommends that companies develop training plans for employees each year in agreement with the employees' representatives.

More generally, the report recommends that major training programs be funded

jointly by companies, professional organizations and governments. It also advocates public funding to implement retraining activities in areas affected by major industrial restructuring.

There are several implications of the preceding discussion for South Africa. First, there is a need for a much stronger governmental funding commitment than has been forthcoming to date. Second, planning must be undertaken to develop "new" skills that go beyond the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It is not clear that a design that employs a lock-step link to primary and secondary schooling standards has the type of flexibility needed to cultivate skills required in the contemporary global economy. Instead, what is needed is a pedagogy that focuses on increasing the extent to which workers are able to use their experience to identify ways to do their jobs more effectively and contribute to the work redesign process. In other words, there must be more of an emphasis on experiential learning than on a fixed curriculum (see Michelson, 1997, for a discussion of how experiential learning is used in adult education in South Africa).

An even greater need is for deliberative bodies in which all stakeholders are represented, whether they are currently linked to the modern economy or not. All parties should have input into the design of ABET and other educational programs to ensure the broadest distribution of opportunities and benefits. As an example, one of the major deliberative bodies within the EU is the Economic and Social Commission, which is comprised of representatives of the workers, large and small businesses, farmers, families, and consumers of each country. All guidance documents, i.e., white papers and green papers, and all proposed laws are submitted to the economic and social committee for consultation.

A structure with similar configuration could help ensure that an appropriate mix of ABET models is developed. Wolpe (1993/94) has argued that distinctive types of adult education are needed to meet the needs of distinct subgroups—workers already in the labor market, the unemployed, and those engaged in the informal economy. The needs of women are particularly overlooked by existing models, and several South African adult education scholars have called for the modification of curricula to correct existing biases (Gumede, 1997; Walters, 1993/94; Wolpe, 1993/94).

A similar perspective can be applied to the issue of race and ethnicity. Adult education scholars who have suggested strategies for the treatment of race and ethnicity in African and South African adult education include Shefer, Samuels, and Sardien (1997) and Nabudere (1996).

The movement toward a modular curriculum in ABET provides the opportunity to create nation-building modules that are not linked specifically to either skills enhancement or formal certification. Modules examining issues of gender and race/ethnicity would be examples of such modules. In addition, a module focusing on the broader construction of South African identity as articulated in the Freedom Charter would contribute significantly to nation-building, particularly in the night school system where many of the schools serve ethnically homogeneous populations that have limited interaction with other racial/ethnic groups.

As South African policymakers continue to grapple with strategies to master the balancing act between skills development and nation-building they would do well to keep in mind the assessment offered by Youngman (1996): "Adult education can and should provide an important support to social action for change. It will be most effective in this role when it is seen in terms of strengthening the possibilities of collective action rather than simply enabling individual development" (p. 26).

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Democratization and Adult Education in Africa

Kassu Gebremariam

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Introduction

In recent times, the paradigm of political democratization is promoted as central to helping tackle the political, economic, humanitarian, social, and physical crises of African countries. The result is that we have been socialized to appreciate democracy only as a form of government theory related to the rule of the majority, individual liberty, free political competition and election, and a free market. The fundamental flaw in such conceptualization of democracy is its failure to relate the concept to how Africans learn and how democratization of adult education can enhance their creative visions to revitalize African societies. This study challenges this failure.

Dominant analytical frameworks, methodologies, and discourses fail to embrace democracy as the core practice of teaching Africans to understand and respond to issues and complex problems in creative and imaginative ways What is evident from assessment of the status of adult education in post-colonial Africa is that despite the due recognition it received, it was ineffective in creating the right climate for participation, self-reliance, and good governance. Freirean pedagogy has been applied in Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe, which had been involved in bloody wars of liberation against Portugal. The Freirean approach has been implemented in a narrow and isolated context in Botswana as a form of theater.

In all instances the inherited colonial bureaucracies of the countries, and the deep-seated authoritarian and patriarchal cultures, militated against the kind of social relations Paulo Freire's pedagogy is Intended to promote. The formal educational institutions of other African countries were not instrumental in terms of promoting socialization of the youth with participatory democratic cultures. What post-colonial African societies had in common were patrimonial regimes and undemocratic educational systems that obstructed the unencumbered pursuit of truth. Both the political systems and the schools operated on the basis of hierarchy, control, and power.

This study has two goals: (1) to provide an overview of the history of adult education in post-colonial Africa with special emphasis on Tanzania as a pioneer in the development of a comprehensive approach to adult education, and (2) to address the current status of adult education relating to the question: What does a democratic education look like?

Adult Education and the Post-Colonial State

Growing awareness of the inadequacy of formal education to the economic growth and priorities accorded to rural development in the mid-1960s led to systematic development of the notion of adult education in Africa. As the study of leading educators from 12 African Commonwealth countries on the status of adult education in Africa indicates, the very term "adult education" presented difficulties in the early 1960s (Townsend-Coles, 1998). The term "adult" caused confusion since out-of-school education directed toward enabling boys and girls to acquire skills at the time was not treated as adult education. This was because adulthood carried enhanced social status and family responsibilities. So too, "education" as a notion gave the impression that it referred only to those activities that were linked to schooling and with nascent ministries of education. Skills training was regarded as something different and separate from adult education. The teaching of agricultural skills, technical skills, and health, literacy, and "second chance education" were classified as training rather than education (Townsend-Coles, 1998).

A major breakthrough in the conceptualization of adult education came about with the establishment of the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Harare (Zimbabwe) in the mid-1960s. Ever since, the notion of adult education has referred to the type of education provided separately from formal schooling without necessarily referring to the age or status of the learner.

Increasingly, the prominence of adult education influenced the development plans of post-colonial regimes in Africa. Its programs included agricultural innovations and training programs, the development of appropriate technologies, evening adult literacy classes, radio and mass media campaigns, and improvement in health education. International aid donor countries such as Sweden sponsored seminars on courses for a study of adult education in Africa. The African Adult Education Association was formed in 1968 (Bown, 1968). The association was born out of a conference held for the Adult Education Association of East and Central Africa in Tanzania in 1964. It had representatives from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia). Later, the association grew into the African Association for Adult Education. French-speaking and Arabic-speaking countries were not represented.

Enhancement in the legitimacy of adult education in the eyes of international aid donors and policy-makers induced African political leaders to talk about it as a key element in their plans for national development. The political elites could not abandon such talks because of the public appeal of the ideology of economic development and eradication of poverty. The ideology was instrumental to the preservation and enhancement of their power. Yet, the preoccupation of leaders with political struggle and personal enrichment crippled the use of adult education for reactivation of indigenous knowledge and identity of their people, and improvement in the quality of life for Africans. The societies were disempowered (Levine, 1983). Autonomous voluntary associations, social and popular movements, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that aimed at enhancing the participation of adults in decision-making were nonexistent as a result of the weakness of civil society.

African countries approached adult education mainly as state-sponsored literacy campaigns without involving the people. For instance, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), the political party that won the elections at independence, had the elimination of illiteracy as one of its aims (Amutabi, 1997). Illiteracy was identified as one of the causes of Kenya's "backwardness" before independence. The dynamism and commitment of KANE began to wane in the aftermath of independence. Existing studies indicate literacy has been offered mainly as a welfare service in several African countries. The governments of Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Zambia have implemented programs of this kind. By contrast, literacy campaigns were attributed high priority as part of the strategy of radical military governments to promote socialist goals of development in Ethiopia and Somalia.

It was emphasized that mass education was necessary in order to involve the people in their own development and for political transformation. In Ethiopia and Somalia, the literacy campaign programs physically involved the mobilization of more than 200,000 students, civil servants, and teachers. They were sent to the countryside to live, learn, teach, and organize peasants and pastoralists. The Somali government under the personalist rule of General Siad Barre scored major accomplishments. It instituted Latin script for the writing of the Somali language in 1972 (Sheik-Abdi, 1981). The use of Somali as a written language brought with it the Somalization of administrative sectors and state functions. This was followed by the gradual use of Somali as the medium of instruction in schools.

The literacy campaign of the government of General Barre, which was launched in the rural areas, was also responsible for sharply reducing illiteracy. The rate of literacy increased from a dismal 5% to an estimated 55% in the mid-1970s (Sheikh-Abdi, 1981). In Ethiopia, the military government of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam used various government-controlled associations such as the peasant associations, youth associations, women's associations, and urban dwellers' associations as the local cornerstones of maintaining literacy classes. What also differentiated the Ethiopian literacy campaigns from that of Somalia Tanzania was that classes were offered in major ethnic languages.

The contribution of adult education, narrowly defined as literacy campaigns by the vast majority of African countries, was of limited use to either economic growth or introduction of political reforms that sought empowerment of marginalized members of society. As the studies of Angela W. Browns and Hazel R. Barrett have shown, there were many practical problems in the delivery of literacy classes in the first place. Among others, the production of manuals and follow-up reading was costly. There was a lack of spare time, especially among women, to attend classes for several hours per week over a prolonged period. There was little time for training during the rainy season. Dropout rates from the literacy classes were often high, and the retention rate of literacy skills acquired was poor (Browne & Barrett, 1991).

Tanzania: Adult Education for Self-reliance

By contrast, the Tanzanian experience showed a broader conception of adult education. This was the only African country that seriously tried to use adult education as an instrument for social and economic policies. Adult education was not narrowly confined to either literacy campaigns or provision of home-craft skills for the "unschooled" as was the case during colonial days (Hall, 1975). Adult education in the Tanzanian experience embraced two different programs: academic upgrading programs (UAP)and skill upgrading programs (SUP) (Torres & Schugurensky, 1994). The UAP included literacy training and adult basic education. A major change in that country's educational system occurred in 1967 when the policy of socialism and self-reliance was formally declared in the Arusha Declaration. The principal objective of the policy was to "build a society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities" (Nyerere, 1968, p. 110). The other objectives of education for self-reliance involved decrease of costs of education and integration of schools with communities. Other policy moves on adult education were made in 1970 and 1971. President Julius Nyerere declared 1970 an adult education year. In 1971, TANU decreed that illiteracy should be eliminated by 1975 (Mushi & Bwatwa, 1998).

Additionally, what distinguishes the Tanzanian illiteracy eradication campaign from that of and other developing countries is that it was assisted by the United Nations Educational and Scientific Cooperation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development (UNDP) World Literacy Program (WELP) (Herman, 1977). Tanzania was one of the 12 countries in the world that participated in the UNESCO Experimental Literacy Project. The rationale for the UNESCO/UNDP program was that literacy was productive if it contributed to economic growth. The Experimental Literacy Project gave centrality to production of cash crops such as cotton, bananas, rice, cashew nuts, wheat, tobacco, tea, and coffee. Animal husbandry and home economics classes were offered as well (Torres & Schugurensky 1990). The allocation of funds by the Tanzanian government for adult education activities were very meager compared to the budget for formal education. In both the 1961-1963 and 1969-1974 periods, adult education received 1.7 million British Pounds as compared to 35.5 million British Pounds allocated to the Ministry of Education for formal education (Lasway, 1997).

Nonetheless, Tanzania pursued a number of measures to promote the goals of adult education. Rural training centers were established to train farmers and local leaders. The first rural libraries were established in the Lake Zone. Mass education and health campaigns were launched. The education campaign was launched under the slogan "T o plan is to choose" ("Kupanga ni Kuchangua") in 1969. The health campaign made people conscious of diseases such as dysentery, malaria, hookworm, bilharzia, and tuberculosis. Another mass education campaign known as "Food is life" was launched to inform people about diseases caused by malnutrition and how to diversify food production (Ergas, 1982). Educational programs using films were introduced. In 1974, the University of Dar es Salaam introduced its first courses in adult education. Radio education programs were introduced for the first time. The Mwanza National Literacy Center and Folk Development Colleges were established in 1976 (Yosiah & Bwatwa 1998).

Educational programs were not organized based on a volunteer basis. Tanzanian officials viewed adult education as a means of curtailing urban migration. Strategies for meeting these goals put heavy emphasis on preventing migration of adults to major cities (Torres & Schugurensky, 1990). Primary school teachers were coerced into teaching adults as part of their overload. Even if the Tanzanian model of adult education was far superior to that of other African societies, its reliance on force had negative consequences. The findings of Carlos Alberto Torres and Daniel Schugurensky reveal that the government's desire to retain peasants in the countryside produced the opposite effect. The main reason Tanzanian adults joined the SUP classes was to seek employment in the urban areas. When students were asked about their reasons for enrolling into the programs, 43.1% said they expected to increase their job opportunities in the cities (Torres & Schugurensky, 1990). The findings of Brown and Barrett are corroborated by Rest B. Lasway's (1997) assessment of adult education in Tanzania. Lasway argued that the Tanzanian achievement of abolition of illiteracy was undermined by the poor literacy infrastructure, including scarcity of libraries, bookstores, and various kinds of printed media in the rural areas.

The Tanzanian experience of adult education, despite its extensiveness, shared similar features with other cases: however, it could not maintain legitimacy since it relied for compliance on force. Though the experiment did not apply to the majority of African countries, the belief in democratic adult education as a means of enabling Africans to take their rightful place as valuable citizens was tried through adoption of the Freirean approach.

Freirean Pedagogy: Adult Education for Democratic Participation

Paulo Freire has been and remains a powerful influence among those eager to develop theoretical and practical alternatives to formal education as practiced in Africa. He believes that formal education, otherwise referred to as "Banking Education," is inherently hierarchical and oppressive. The more students put their efforts into receiving and storing information, the less they can attain the critical consciousness that comes from "intervening in reality as makers of and transformers of the world." The key to appreciation of Freire's liberating adult education is to understand his concept of conscientization. At its most basic, conscientization can be understood as the process by which Africans become aware of the sources of their oppression. They may not have the intellectual confidence—if they are illiterate, for example—to 'reflect upon the world' and develop their own agenda for change.

Conscientization, then, is the process by which the capacity for critical thinking by marginalized Africans—of themselves and the community and, ultimately the society they live in—can be expanded. The other concept central to the Freirean approach is his concept of dialogue. In this case, the adult educator, rather than deposit his 'superior knowledge' to be passively digested, memorized and repeated, must engage in a genuine 'dialogue' or 'creative exchange,' with the participants. The genius of such an educational process and literacy method is that the question of acquiring literacy (or any other skill) occurs within the participant's reality.

The first African countries to employ the Freirean method of adult education to promote these objectives were Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tomé and Principe. When the Portuguese withdrew from their former colonies, Paulo Freire and his colleagues were invited to take part in the literacy campaigns of the countries. In both instances Freire's notion of literacy of adult education went beyond the mechanics of reading and writing. Adult education was perceived as an integral part of the process of democratization that discloses rather than covers those things about the counties' reality and difficulties. The programs addressed the issues of the people's political participation in changing both the societies and their citizens, and the question of the inhibiting legacies of Portuguese colonialism.

The dynamic relationship between reading the text and reading the context, and between reading the word and reading reality, were directly related to production, to health, to the regular, system of instruction, and the overall plans for the countries. Students were encouraged to generate words and themes as they learned to read and write, stimulating them to critical reflections on their respective situations. This was a very radical and a participatory approach to adult education since it did not limit itself to syllabification—ba-bi-bo-bu.

The other instance where the Freirean method of adult education is used pertains to the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) in Uganda. REFLECT proved to be more effective at teaching people to read and write and at linking literacy to wider development. Of those adults who initially enrolled in REFLECT circles, 68% achieved basic literacy over a one-year period. Learners spoke of self-realization as one of the major benefits of the undertaking. Most spoke of better self-esteem and the enhanced capacity to analyze and solve problems as well as articulate ideas. Improving their understanding of the local environment (agriculture, health, income generation, and survival skills) helped the process of self-realization, which was also manifested by improved relations within the community.

The Freirean method of participatory adult education was applied to theater in northern Botswana and called Laedza Batanawi. Laedza Batanawi developed out of concern over low community participation and indifference to government-initiated developmental projects in the area. The assumption is that popular theater can enhance authentic participation, critical awareness, and collective action. The organizers designed a rallying slogan and theme song, Laedza Batanani "Laedza" means "the sun is up." "Batanani" means "let us come together and work together." The theater program became an annual festival providing a means for expression of feelings about and analysis of major problems in the community. Yet the hindrances the power structures in Botswana posed at the local, regional, and national levels eroded the efficacy of the theater for social transformation and empowerment of the community in Botswana.

The practice of democratic teaching and learning was not practiced in other African countries where there were no social movements that enforced the accountability and transparency of officials through regular competitive elections. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s in Africa, authoritarian and patrimonial rule marked the regional governments. In particular, the 1980s was the most unstable and destructive decade in Africa, with a total of eleven wars, including the renewal of fighting in the Sudan in 1983, and the beginning of vicious civil wars in Uganda (1980), Somalia (1982), and Liberia (1989). By mid-1984, the 46 independent sub-Saharan African countries alone had suffered at least 60 successful coups (Sandbrook, 1986). Ghana and Benin ranked first, each having suffered at least five successful overthrows. The noncoup states of Cameroon, Gabon, the Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal maintained civilian rule since they had defense agreements with France (Tordoff 1997). The absence of conditions that empower civil societies and institute democratic adult education plunged African countries into deep political and economic crises. Minimal conditions for sustainable growth and democratization did not exist. These crises were exacerbated by global recession and soaring oil prices.

Structural Adjustment and Adult Education

An environment of economic and political stability is basic to encouraging growth and expansion of participatory adult education. The World Bank study of sub-Saharan African countries delineates three distinct periods with regard to their economic decline: 1961-72, when incomes per capita grew; 1973-80, a period of stagnation; and 1981-87, years of decline. In the 1970s, six countries—Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Principe, and Zambia—slipped from the middle-income to the low-income group (World Bank, 1989). The contribution of agriculture to production declined to less than one third of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since 1973, export volumes remained stagnant or declined significantly in most of the countries. The share of Africa's exports in world trade fell from 2.4% 1970 to 1.7% in 1985. African counties' foreign debt grew faster than that of other developing regions. It rose from about $6 billion in 1970 to $134 billion in 1988 (World Bank, 1989).

Economic decline required significant cutbacks in education spending. Expenditures in public education dropped from $10 billion in 1980 to $8.9 billion in 1983. The rate of growth in enrollments at the primary level declined from an annual rate of 6.5% during 1960-70 and 8.9% during 1970-80 to 4.7% in the first three years of the 1980s. The stagnation of enrollments and the erosion of quality of life in the late 1970s was contrary to the rapid increase in student enrollment in African. institutions in the 1960s and 1970s (Altbach 1989). The goal of universal primary education receded during the decade of the 1980s. This meant a retreat from expansion of adult education. Primary education is a means to adult education and is hardly ever an end in itself (Lee 1988).

The deepening crises meant that African states sought more international aid and loans. The major transnational financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), agreed to provide special foreign aid on the condition that African countries implement the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). The special foreign aid became available on condition that African governments adopt a series of economic policies often termed liberalization. Among others, the IMF's and the World Bank's prescriptions included: decreased direct government role in the economy, reduction in the size of the civil service, support for privatization of public services and other activities, and substantial devaluation. According to the World Bank's 1988 report, the nature of Africa's educational crisis had two aspects: stagnating enrollments and erosion of educational quality. The report identified the causative factors of this decrease as the explosion of the school-age population and the economic decline.

The World Bank's report recommended a three-pronged strategy consisting of: (1) adjustment to demographic and economic constraints, (2) revitalization of the educational infrastructure and restoration of educational quality, and (3) selective expansion through renewed universal primary education (World Bank, 1988). However, contrary to the rosy scenario of the World Bank, implementation of SAP had some devastating effects on public expenditure on adult education. SAP reduced sub-Saharan African countries' per capita spending on education by 0.7% a year in the 1980s up to 1996. Countries that once had successful educational programs, such as Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, lost their former gains. Illiteracy rose in Tanzania, which was officially estimated at only 3.2% in 1986. Illiteracy reached 23% in 1998. UNESCO suspects this figure may be much higher than officially reported.

Between 1990 and 1995, illiteracy in the South African Development Community (SADC) rose by three million people. In Zimbabwe, the literacy rate has shrunk since 1992 when the SAPS were implemented. Africa is currently serving its debts to the tune of US$13 billion when all it needs is some US$3 billion to fund universal primary education. The Zambian government spends four times as much on debt servicing as on education. The repayment to the U.S. of obligations on Zambia's $7 billion debt absorbs more than education and health combined. The debt burden represents 69% of African countries' Gross National Product (GNP). Nigeria and Zambia, between 1984 and 1988, experienced an 8% reduction in the share of education in the national budget. Public spending per student fell by 33% and 60% in Nigeria and Zambia, respectively (Bababola, Lungwanga, & Adeyinka, 1999). In Nigeria, primary schools suffered the problem of low completion rates. Of the 2,762 million in the 1986 primary school cohort, 5% did not complete primary four by 1989. In Zambia, 21% per cent of the children entering Grade 1 were unable to complete the primary education cycle.

The failure of SAP to curtail the downward spiral of African countries provided a clear lesson that a government with an insecure political base could not successfully solve problems about either the erosion of educational quality or the restructuring of the national economy. Instituting legitimacy of African governments through democratic procedures thus became the major focus of international lenders and aid donors who failed to link it with instituting participatory adult education Western powers and their financial institutions, Western NGOs, and the UN's specialized agencies failed to move beyond the simplistic notions of democracy as a majority rule, individual liberty, or a free market. The net effect of the initiation of measures to end authoritarian regimes in and of its own left the status quo intact, ignoring the fact that democracy in governance cannot succeed on its own apart from democratic ways of learning and living together.

The Increasing Inadequacy and Inappropriateness of Yesterday's Solutions

Beginning approximately in 1990, a period of democratization solely confined to governance and decision-making procedures began to take place as a result of intense domestic protests and international pressures by major Western powers. Appraisals of the prospects for instituting democratic governance that would expedite instituting democratic adult education in Africa vary widely, ranging from pessimistic scenarios to rosy futures (Kaplan, 1994; Chege, 1994; Ottaway, 1999). What is incontestable is that political change has certainly occurred in African countries. The study of Michael Bratton on political developments since the 1990s ably summarizes Africa's divergent transitions (Bratton, 1997). He attempts to show the indicators for change in African politics with respect to patrimonial rules. The first indicator is connected to increased political competition. The number of African countries holding competitive legislative elections more than quadrupled to 38 between 1990 and 1995.

The average share of legislative seats held by opposition parties rose 10% in 1989 to 31% by 1994. The other indicator of decline in personalist rule was leadership turnover. Before 1990, on only one occasion was a sitting chief executive displaced by means of an election. This was in Mauritius in 1982 (Bratton, 1997). In the five short years between 1990 and 1994 at least 15 democratic leadership transitions occurred.

The March 1991 election in Benin marked the first instance on mainland Africa that a peaceful succession of power occurred as a consequence of the expressed will of the people. In the aftermath of 1996, elected leaders in Namibia, Niger, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Sao Tomé and Principe, and South Africa have shown adherence to constitutional procedures.

The overwhelming evidence, however, indicates that the prospect for immediate transition to democratic governments is unlikely (Clapham, 1998; Ottaway, 1999). Since 1995, elected governments have been overthrown by military coups in Burundi, Gambia, and Niger. The governments of Lesotho and the Comoros called on outside assistance to put down military mutinies. In Zambia and Ivory Coast, newly elected leaders excluded their rivals by revising constitutional rules. External tinkering failed to create democratically elected regimes in Kenya and Congo. The rise of military intervention in the territories of neighbors is another development, which dims the chances of a democratic future for Africa. Nigeria intervened in Sierra Leone. The Rwandan government's forces took an active role in overthrowing the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, and Ethiopia has recently intervened in southern Somalia. The future for democratization becomes even more fragile as some important countries sink deeper into conflict. Ethiopia and Eritrea are at war. Angola, Congo, and Sudan are in a state of civil war. Other countries have no minimal attributes of "stateness." Among them are marginalized countries such as Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, and Congo.

On the other hand, the evidence on whether a democratic method of adult education will ever become a pervasive way of life in Africa is not encouraging. So far, the Freirean method of adult education does not appear to have much appeal. Tanzania is the one country that has recently borrowed from the Freirean philosophy that encourages dialogue over formal classes. A Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) was adopted in response to the failures of previous traditional literacy approaches in eradicating literacy. Tanzania also adopted the Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE) Model as the country's approach to the abolition of illiteracy. The plan is to expand the community-based adult education program to all regions by the year 2001/2 (Mushi & Bwatwa, 1997).

Tanzania has used a wide variety of adult educational delivery programs, including radio, television, and distance education. It launched a distance education initiative in 1990. In 1993, it established the Open University of Tanzania to prepare students for various degrees through correspondence study. A community-based literacy project was launched with a view to developing an appropriate community-based literacy model to guide literacy development initiatives in the 21st century. The Kishinda Village in Mwanza and Semet Village in Kilimanjaro were selected as testing grounds (Lasway, 1997).

The spread of adult education in other instances shows several disparities between and within African countries. It has shown noteworthy strides in post-Apartheid South Africa. The concept of lifelong learning, defined as the possibility of learning and education at any age—"from the cradle to the grave"—is being promoted (Walters, 1999). Many of the existing programs in adult education and adult training are offered by South African trade unions. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) gives important leadership in enterprise-based training as well as entry-level skills (Walters, 1999). South Africa is also at the forefront of developing a core curriculum for the training of gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators. The basic aim of the program is to train adult educators who wish to challenge oppressive gender relations, pointing out that the educators have to become self-conscious actors who reflect on their own privilege and oppression and act to change both themselves and society.

Roadblocks to the Growth and Expansion of Adult Education

What is often overlooked in today's assessment and reports about democratizing adult education in Africa is the existence of several causes for lack of access to education. The wrong priorities of African governments, lack of resources, as well as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, pose major obstacles despite the due recognition adult education has received. Setting wrong priorities, such as defense expenditures, hinders progress in this connection. Africa spends US$7 billion a year on arms. Angola and Mozambique, who spent heavily on defense during the civil wars, have the highest levels of illiteracy in the region (SADC), officially reckoned at 60%. The Zimbabwean government has been criticized for sending troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing the largest contingent of foreign troops fighting to support President Lawrent Kabila's regime against Rwandan and Ugandan rebels.

Lack of money keeps African children out of school. Governments spend only some 2% of the GDP on education. About 40 million children get no basic education. This number is expected to rise to 75 million children by 2015 (*The Economist,* 1999). Money spent on each child is half what it was 20 years ago. Out-of-school education is the first to suffer from budget cuts. Adult education cannot be functional without meaningful primary education. What discourages African countries in fostering adult education is their dependence on international assistance. The 30 African countries deepest in debt spend as much on interest as on education and health combined. The inflow of international aid will not be able to improve the decline in literacy since only 15% of it is earmarked for education and health (*The Economist,* 1999). The pace of population expansion has outstripped gains in literacy (Ntiri, 1998).

Literacy skills can be lost if sufficient resources and materials are not made available for newly literate adults to make use of them in their daily professional lives. For instance, reading a newspaper is a habit that requires and reinforces basic literacy skills. It is also worth noting that there is no better way for educators to actively promote freedom of expression and democracy in their respective countries than by working hand-in-hand with newspapers. The democracy and freedom that adult educators defend and promote requires that newly literate adults should enjoy access to information, analysis, and debate. When properly utilized, newspapers and magazines can efficiently promote critical thinking, creativity and resourcefulness. So far, only a few West African countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, and Mali appear to appreciate the value of newspapers and setting up village reading room pilot projects in rural areas.

There are other reasons why adult education is faltering in Africa. The spread of the culture of violence in those societies afflicted by protracted violent conflicts poses a major impediment to the dissemination of adult education (O'Brien, 1996; Rashid, 1997; Richards, 1996). The research of Donald B. Cruise finds that the youths of Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, and Mozambique have developed a war-like attitude toward life. Uneducated and educated youths continue looting, pillaging, and terrorizing in these and other conflict-prone countries. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone, for example, expands by capturing young people from the villages and towns it attacks (Richards, 1996). Likewise, Somalia's youth are involved in sub-clan fighting using their weapons as a means to gainful employment. They are engaged in looting, pillaging, and terrorizing towns and cities in the southern part of Somalia.

The spread of the AIDS epidemic is another factor undermining the future of adult education on the continent. AIDS is reducing the hard-won returns on investment in education. Each day in Africa 11,000 people contract the HIV infection that causes AIDS, which has now infected a total of 23 million Africans. According to the Executive Director of United Nations AIDS, over 69% of the world's AIDS cases occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Millions of students and teachers are dying or leaving school because of illness, or to care for family members. More than 30% of teachers in Malawi and Zambia are already infected. In one Kenyan province, between 20 and 30 teachers die each month. The sheer number of AIDS orphans is predicted to reach 13 million by the end of 2000.

AIDS is the leading cause of death of the most educated and skilled young adults in urban areas. At the end of 1991, in Kinshasa, Congo's capital, over 7% of the city's three million people were estimated to have AIDS (Gordon, 1996). It is the leading cause of death for adolescent males in Ivory Coast. Many women become infected at younger ages than men and are dead before age 25. The rate of infection is higher in women than in men. For instance, in 1994, of the 1.3 million Africans dying of AIDS, 40% were estimated to be women, 37% were men, and 23% were children. By some estimates, 100 women contracted HIV per 100 men in 1995 (Gordon ,1996). According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) estimate, Africa, with only 10% of the world's population, had 25-50% of all AIDS-infected population. The rate of HIV infection is expected to rise from 1% in 1990 to 8% by 2015. The virus has become the number one killer of African children. Kenya has seen life expectancy drop by 15 years because of the AIDS epidemic (*The Economist*, 1999).

Of the several themes that have emerged from a study of the current status of adult education in 12 Commonwealth African countries, two deserve particular mention (Towns-Coles, 1998). The first is the lack of trained people for work in adult education. In Kenya the national literacy program suffers from a shortage of qualified teachers. Only 1,200 of the required 4,000 full-time teaching posts are filled, while only 25% of adult education teachers are qualified. The other problematic area is related to how nonformal adult education should be administered The ability of different NGOs and governmental institutions to make contributions for development and democratization depends on the existence of accepted structure. Botswana and Kenya set positive examples in settling the question of how adult education should be administered in African countries. Kenya has set up a representative Board of Adult Education in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Botswana has a Rural Extension Co-ordinating Committee in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services.

As the evidence has shown, the prospects for democratization of adult education are dim in settings where social movements do not enforce accountability and transparency of officials with regular occurrence of competitive elections, and where implementation of people-centered programs are precarious. The societies as well as their educational institutions operate on the basis of hierarchy, manipulation and control, and power. They do not embrace equality among leaders and local citizens, faculty and students, and administrators and parents.

What Is to Be Done?

A survey of the status of adult education in post-colonial Africa shows how disregard of democratization of adult education impedes resolving the political, economic, social, and physical crises of the continent. It is critical that African governments and African educators reassess the paradigmatic assumptions of traditional approaches to adult education. One significant limitation of the paradigmatic assumptions of democratization is its being indifferent to the inseparable links between the political forms of democracy and participatory ways of learning and teaching. Indeed, African educators have evoked the importance of democratization of education and getting the context right. Thus, in grappling with the question of how adult education can be a new agency to development and democratization, we need to adopt the following policy measures in the short run.

First, more than anything, African adults need to regain their self-confidence. Only then can Africa engage as an equal with the rest of the world, devising its own solutions best suited to the specificity of African states, African society, and the changing structures of the international system. Reactivation of indigenous knowledge that resides in people, their oral histories, stories, sets of beliefs, poems, dances and music, and legends and folk tales, constitutes part of the effort of developing an adult education and democratization premised on local cultures. Oral history, poetry, proverbs, and song must be systematically published. A series of journals needs to be initiated on these subjects. The expansion of cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, and national archives must be encouraged. Citizens must be mobilized to report on historic sites and preserve historical buildings (Pankhurst, 1999). The reactivation of the West African "bush school" emphasis on character building may be the key to instituting the trust and wisdom capital of ancestors in a region so fragmented and segmented.

Second, indigenous crafts and skills that have fallen into disuse, such as those of the potter, the tinker, and the blacksmith, should be revived (Goulet, 1979). In so doing, an adult education promotes self-reliance in countries that have sunk deeper into abyss. Not only can these skills promote self-reliance, but adult education can also help villagers educate themselves in local government. In local communities, especially in Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, and other places where the state's authority is eroded, people have to fend for themselves. These societies are losing control of territory and the ability to tax, to maintain roads and transportation links, and to provide basic service to the people.

Third, development of an adult education that seeks to foster the goals of capacity building is necessary. It must seek to revise the decline in state capabilities while simultaneously encouraging the development of the capacities of civil society. These involve capacity-building in a wide range of areas, including governance, judicial systems, health, education, agriculture, environment, and so on. Civic organizations, voluntary associations, women's groups, unions, cooperatives, and NGOs can be engaged in such undertakings. Finally, given the decline in the institutional strength of the states and their incapacity to ensure stability, promotion of peace as a state value tying it to indigenous people's meanings of "peace" and "peacelessness" is crucial. Peace education by civic organizations can teach humane skills to the adult population. Negotiation, mediation, listening, team-building, a reactivation of the wisdom capital of elders, and historic means of diffusion of conflicts are important.

Conclusion

It was claimed at the outset that the notion of democracy should not be solely seen as a form of government, and such a conceptualization is too narrow and not robust and dynamic enough to assist Africans to respond to their problems in creative and visionary ways. Herein lies the contributions of democratic adult education to a continent afflicted by complex problems. The evidence on whether the Freirean pedagogical ideas have assisted in alleviating the crises of countries so far is not encouraging. What is clear from the experiment in Botswana is that the power structure of societies at the local, regional, and national levels must be taken into account in seeking to institute democratic social relations. Yet, there is a fundamental similarity between those who work for democratization of education and those who work for creating accountable governance: both are at least optimistic that Africans can create a better world in which to live.

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